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The Nation.

December 29, 1984–January 5, 1985 $1.25; U.K. 65p

EDITORIAL

THE CLOSED STATE COMETH

In the hands of the generals and directors of the national security state, secrecy is a weapon of aggression as well as a device of defense. This Administration is obsessed with secrecy, and every time it mobilizes to stanch a leak, indict a spy or shroud a space shot, it is also projecting police power and military might. The uses of secrecy are extending far into the political realm, beyond the necessity of self-protection.

When the Defense Department announced, with all the drama its news management team could produce, that the details of the January shuttle flight would be secret, even casual observers of military matters figured that a signals intelligence collecting device—the well-reported SIGINT satellite—would be aboard. Caspar Weinberger came close to charging *The Washington Post* with treason last week for publishing what everyone already knew. The show of secrecy was meant to mystify the American audience, impress allies and frighten the Russians.

The recent rash of spy arrests seems to derive from the same scare tactics, rather than from stepped-up K.G.B. operations. Over the decades our spies and theirs have achieved a rough parity. The decision to go public about the other side's spies is usually based as much on cold war politics as on national security.

Consider the curious arrest of Karl F. Koecher, a Czech émigré who became an American citizen and worked for the C.I.A. Under F.B.I. questioning, he mentioned giving a document to Prague in 1975—at the C.I.A.'s behest, he claimed. Thomas P. Cavanagh, the Northrop engineer with a rock-bottom security clearance, reportedly offered the Russians "secret Stealth airplane technology" over the telephone. Unfortunately for him, the F.B.I. was also on the line. It's that easy these days to reach out and touch the national secrecy state.

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Scott MacLeod

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MINORITY REPORT

WHY ED MEESE SHOULDN'T BE CONFIRMED

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

In October 1975 the staff of the Watergate special prosecutor released its final report. Prominent among the recommendations was the following:

> The President should not nominate, and the Senate should not confirm, as Attorney General or as any other appointee in high Department of Justice posts, a person who has served as the President's campaign manager or in a similar high-level campaign role. . . . A campaign manager seeks support for his candidate and necessarily incurs obligations to political leaders and other individuals through wide geographic areas.

If only the liabilities incurred by Edwin Meese were merely geographic in their scope. He has shown, in his contriving a tax exemption for the racialist degree-mill Bob Jones University, that his loyalty is to the Republican Party platform rather than to the body of law and precedent. He has proved, in his correspondence with Reagan crony Lyn Nofziger regarding the desegregation of schools in Washington State, that he has one ear cocked to the voices of his fellow time servers. He has also shown, in his December 1983 comment about poor people's preference for soup kitchens and in his description of the American Civil Liberties Union as a "criminals' lobby," that his other ear is as deaf as a stump.

Unfortunately, it is not these considerations that will obstruct his confirmation as Attorney General of the United States. When the Senate Judiciary Committee meets next month for what the White House and the Republican majority regard as a pushover hearing, they will have to

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LETTERS.

LESSONS OF THE 1950s

New York City

In citing Morris Ernst's lifelong battle in concert with the F.B.I. to hunt down and expose Communists and others found undeserving of civil liberties, Harrison E. Salisbury pointed to Ernst and Heywood Broun's collaboration "when the Communists tried to take over the [American Newspaper] guild" ["The Strange Correspondence of Morris Ernst and John Edgar Hoover, 1939–1964," Dec. 1]. According to Salisbury, Ernst and Broun "joined forces and repelled the challenge." Salisbury then continued, "Ernst also did battle with the party in the National Lawyers Guild, but that time he lost."

Salisbury, in that one sentence, does precisely what he claims to have qualms about in Ernst's intimate relationship with F.B.I. witch hunting. The National Lawyers Guild is, and has been since its founding in 1937, a progressive legal association established as an alternative to the American Bar Association, which in 1937 did not admit black attorneys and was putting forth the most reactionary positions on the legal and political issues of the day. The guild is open to any member of the legal community who shares its principles, and it has been in the forefront of the battle for civil liberties, racial and sexual equality and economic justice. The guild today has 7,000 members in more than one hundred chapters nationwide.

In a case now being litigated, *NLG v. Attorney General*, the guild has received more than 300,000 pages of F.B.I. documents describing forty years of break-ins, wiretaps, infiltration and disruption of the guild by the F.B.I. That intensive surveillance of the guild was initiated by Hoover in part because of the guild's open criticism of the illegal methods employed by the F.B.I., and because of publication of reports from the Judith Coplon case documenting unlawful F.B.I. activity. The documents show that despite the intensive investigation, when there was an effort to add the National Lawyers Guild to the Attorney General's "List of Subversive Organizations" in the mid-1950s, the F.B.I. knew it did not have even a prima facie case of Communist control or domination of the guild. The guild was never added to the list.

Undeterred by the lack of legal authority, the F.B.I. continued and in fact intensified its investigation of the guild in subsequent years, adding new elements from COINTELPRO, always attempting to discredit the guild with the Communist label. Salisbury's offhand comment only perpetuates this effort.

Today, we are faced with perhaps an even more serious constitutional crisis than that which was posed by the anti-Communist hysteria of the 1950s. In its motion for summary judgment in *NLG v. Attorney General*, the government made the startling and frightening claim that to preserve national security the executive has the power to undertake any actions, no matter how unconstitutional. This is not a time for divisions among the opposition. Let us learn the lessons of the 1950s. *Barbara Dudley*
President, National Lawyers Guild

SALISBURY REPLIES

New York City

I think it is eminently clear from the text of my article that I do not share the opinions of J. Edgar Hoover and Morris Ernst on many subjects, including their view of the National Lawyers Guild. *Harrison E. Salisbury*

THE A.C.L.U. & THE F.B.I.

Pittsburgh

By focusing so closely on the odyssey of Morris Ernst, Harrison E. Salisbury leaves the impression that it was Ernst, not the American Civil Liberties Union, who tied the knot with Hoover during the 1940s and 1950s. Ernst was a key player, but he was not alone in establishing a close relationship with the F.B.I. The board of directors of the A.C.L.U. knew of and approved of the proceedings of Ernst and others. So there is no reason to wonder what executive directors Roger Baldwin and John J. Pemberton Jr. would have thought had they known of Ernst's dealings with Hoover. Indeed, as the F.B.I. files on the A.C.L.U. disclose, both those men had their own rendezvous with Hoover. As for Freda Kirchwey of *The Nation*, she resigned from the A.C.L.U.'s National Committee once the United States entered World War II, protesting the organization's policy of defending free speech for fascists in wartime (but saying nothing regarding the A.C.L.U.'s defense of free speech for Communists during the war). So she wasn't in the A.C.L.U. when Ernst made most of his contacts with Hoover.

In short, the evidence suggests that it is more accurate to speak of the A.C.L.U.-F.B.I. connection, rather than the Ernst-Hoover connection. *William A. Donohue*

A COZY RELATIONSHIP

Chicago

To those of us who have worked in progressive causes over the last four decades, Harrison E. Salisbury's revelations concerning the cozy relationship between America's top cop and the great civil libertarian are not surprising.

The obsession of many "liberals" with anti-Communism affected every progressive organization in the United States and contributed in large measure to their ineffectiveness or destruction.

While the ostensible targets of government Red-baiters were Communist Party members and sympathizers, the real objectives lay elsewhere. The disastrous and futile interventions of U.S. armed forces from Korea to Vietnam could not be maintained unless dissent from the left was silenced. Official and unofficial Red-baiting created the climate of public opinion that accepted the interventions and other crimes against humanity too numerous to list in this letter.

Morris Ernst and other elites lent respectability to official Red-baiting, and by so doing, contributed to some of the most disgraceful episodes in American history.
Gilbert Gordon

IT (ALMOST) GOES WITHOUT SAYING

New York City

I realize it is unlikely that any readers of this magazine actually believed Alexander Cockburn's caricature of Paul Berman as an old leftist turned new conservative ["Letters," Dec. 15], but let the record be cleared just in case. Berman is too young to be an old anything, and his commitments to the New Left issues listed by Cockburn are well documented by his writing in *The Village Voice*, *The Nation* and elsewhere.
Elizabeth Pochoda

COCKBURN REPLIES

New York City

Biological age has nothing to do with it. As Nat Hentoff has so movingly written in *The Village Voice*, embryos a mere week after conception exhibit intense pleasure when articles from *Dissent* and *New Leader* are read aloud to them. I yield to Berman's editor on his documentable commitment to such New Left issues as support for the Palestinians, solidarity with the Third World and opposition to the Vietnam War, but I do recall one recent Berman position: his rather old left insistence that Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition candidacy was a noxious distraction from the healing mayoral bid of Basil Paterson. *Alexander Cockburn*

CORRECTION

Due to a mechanical error, a word was omitted from the headline of Todd Gitlin's article in last week's issue. The head should have read, "Time to Move Beyond Deterrence."

The Nation welcomes letters—typed, double spaced and no longer than 300 words, please. Letters may be edited for reasons of space.

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EDITORIALS.

Unesco Walkout

President Reagan's favorite brand of diplomacy is the quiet kind. His idea of a good time is a pleasant chat with a friendly tyrant about democratic reforms and free elections. He is glad to take no for an answer. He is happy to refrain from ultimatums, démarches and *casus belli.* In the case of South Africa, he calls his approach "constructive engagement," which means big talk and small change.

But for some reason, Reagan chose to be neither quiet nor constructive in his engagement with the United Nations. His noisiest taunt was the announcement of U.S. withdrawal from Unesco. He was not responding to a national consensus for withdrawal. Most of the major media had been opposed to the move.

Conservatives as well as liberals shared that view. Leonard R. Sussman, executive director of Freedom House, a center of cold war theory and practice, criticized the Administration's "blunderbuss tactics" in his organization's newsletter and wondered whether the United States was "merely using UNESCO as a pawn in the larger effort to alter or leave the UN system itself?"

Surely Sussman's suspicions are warranted. The stated reasons for the U.S. withdrawal are specious and irrelevant: Unesco is too "politicized"; it is too "bureaucratic"; it is extravagant, ideological and irresponsible. The real reason

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is that Unesco represents Third World aspirations for recognition and power in the international order, and with only one vote out of 161 and no veto, the United States cannot check those demands from the inside.

It is simply not true, as the Heritage Foundation avers, that Unesco is an incarnation of the world communist conspiracy. The agency has many weaknesses, and its operations are often deformed by the inevitable pressures caused by underdevelopment, decolonization and big-power polarization. But the reforms the United States had asked for constituted a demand for submission, not a blueprint for constructive change.

Under the guise of anticommunism, the Reagan Administration is waging war on the Third World. The move against Unesco is one step in that campaign, perhaps not a decisive one. But the process that has begun is dangerous and destructive, and Reagan must be prepared for counterattacks down the road.

'Observer' at 30

In December, *The Texas Observer* celebrated its thirtieth birthday. Wow! How in the world has a radical journal like *The Observer* lasted thirty years in a state like Texas? The miracle becomes even more awesome when you consider how thin a shoestring it has operated on. Now it squeaks by on $250,000 a year, which pays not only for production and postage costs of 11,500 copies every two weeks but for salaries of the staff of five. The top stipend is $13,500, hardly enough to keep a network commentator in hair spray.

It just goes to show that a great tradition is hard to kill. And in this instance the tradition is a tribute to one man, the amazing Ronnie Dugger, and the cohorts of extraordinary journalists he has inspired. Dugger, who had returned from postgraduate studies at Oxford University to work in Washington and had just resigned from a Federal job as the result of a brush with McCarthyism, was hired as the paper's first editor. He was 24 years old.

The paper's liberal backers got more than they had bargained for: not a partisan broadsheet but a real newspaper the likes of which Texas had never seen. Few states have. Here was an inexperienced kid doing more to expose graft, corruption, conflicts of interest and apathy in state government, and brutality in the prison and hospital systems, than had ever been done by the entire Texas press establishment. As a result of Dugger's magnificently detailed exposés of land and insurance scandals, quite a few state officials resigned, went to prison or fled the country.

Sometimes Dugger had an assistant, but mostly it was a one-man operation—long stretches of twenty-hour days on an almost nonexistent budget. His successes were sometimes mixed. He crusaded against illiteracy, publishing statistics showing that 800,000 Texans couldn't read or write. The legislature, tired of being berated as hardhearted, appropriated enough money to teach 10,000 of them. After years of calling for a law to control loan sharks, Dugger saw one pass—allowing interest rates of up to 320 percent.

Sometimes Dugger was reckless. He went to East Texas and gathered enough evidence to persuade Federal officials to open an investigation into the killing of a black man. The local sheriff, enraged at Dugger's nosiness, accused him of suppressing evidence because he had taken away the casing of a bullet he had found at the scene of the crime. Dugger went back, scratched around, unearthed some bullets and gave them to the grand jury.

Always he was cocky. His confidence came partly from knowing he was accountable to no one for his editorial views or his personal quirks. He was once spotted on a street corner in downtown Dallas hollering at the top of his lungs, apparently for no other reason than to make a kind of animal protest against the existence of such an awful city.

The editors who followed him have had their individual styles, strengths and weaknesses, but *The Observer* remains a hallowed, sometimes hated, journal of dissent. It continues to be (it has no rivals) the conscience of Texas. Once when the paper was turning up the highest piles of bureaucratic dirt, Allan Shivers, the reactionary Texas Governor, was asked what good it had done. He replied, "So far as I'm aware, *The Texas Observer* has never done anything good for the state at all."

Happy Birthday, *Texas Observer*. We hope you continue your good-for-nothing ways for many years.

A Christmas Carol

All right, children, is everybody settled? Good. Stay quiet now, and Uncle Ronald will tell you *A Christmas Carol*, by Charles Dickens. Once upon a time, in the city of London, England, there was an honest, hardworking businessman named Ebenezer Scrooge. With his partner, Jacob Marley, Scrooge founded a small but profitable blacking factory in Cheapside. Then Marley died and Scrooge was left to run the business alone, assisted by his clerk, a man named Bob Cratchit. This Cratchit fellow wasn't much help. He was a lazy, worthless agitator type who was always trying to organize the other workers into a union. He kept Cratchit on purely out of the goodness of his heart, because Cratchit had a crippled son named Tiny Tim. Far from showing his gratitude, however, Cratchit accused his employer of violating the child labor laws and threatened to take him to court. Even though Scrooge patiently explained that nobody else would hire 8-year-old children, Cratchit just sneered, "Bah, Humbug!"

This Cratchit had no team spirit whatsoever; he was always trying to shirk his duties and constantly nagging Scrooge for days off. Reminds me of certain Federal employees who are too lazy to work on Martin Luther King's birthday. Nowadays, of course, Cratchit would have been calling for government boondoggles like the Legal Services Corporation and Aid to Families with Dependent Children, and for cuts in defense spending to pay for them.

Now, where was I? Oh yes, the straw that broke the camel's

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back was Cratchit's refusal to work on Christmas Day, even though Scrooge was swamped by the end-of-the-year inventory. I should think that it would have been the essence of the Christmas spirit for him to help poor Scrooge keep his costs down. But no. Cratchit said he'd promised Tiny Tim he'd be home for Christmas dinner, and if he didn't come the boy's heart would be broken. Now, Scrooge had seen this Tiny Tim, and he suspected he was faking a gimpy leg so he could collect disability payments, or whatever they called it in those days. Like father, like son. Cratchit was what was known as an "almshouse chiseler," which means he was always getting money from poorhouses under the system of socialism that was prevalent in England before Mrs. Thatcher turned the country around. At any rate, when Cratchit refused to work on Christmas Day, Scrooge just blew his top and fired him.

Well, Cratchit stormed out, vowing to get revenge. Using money he'd cadged from the almshouse, he went to a pub and had some drinks with an out-of-work actor he knew. This fellow used to play ghosts in Shakespearean plays until he was kicked out of the Stage Actors Guild for un-British activities. The two of them hatched a plot whereby the actor would dress up like a ghost, sneak into Scrooge's room at midnight and frighten the old man out of his wits.

I'm afraid this bit of blackmail worked all too well, because poor Scrooge had a cardiac condition and was under doctor's orders not to get excited. The ghost told him in a deep, scary voice to bring a turkey and two bottles of gin to the Cratchit place on Christmas Day or someone would tell the police that he'd been dumping blacking into the Thames and polluting the royal swans. So the next morning he sent the Cratchits a basketful of food, and they all got high on plum pudding. Cratchit was so elated by his success that he persuaded his co-workers to go on strike, and Scrooge finally had to move his blacking business to India, where the work ethic was still strong.

So that's my story, children. Happy holidays to you all, and by golly, even if it is illegal to teach young people about the Man Upstairs, I'm going to say it: God bless us, every one!

RICHARD LINGEMAN

MINORITY REPORT.

Meese

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

confront three serious contradictions in the bluff testimony Meese gave before the committee last March. These were not recognized at the time. Nor were they emphasized sufficiently in the report of independent counsel Jacob A. Stein [see "Minority Report," October 6]. They are:

§ *The Barrack Factor.* On March 5, 1984, Thomas Barrack, a real estate developer, told the Senate Judiciary Committee that although he had helped sell Meese's house in La Mesa, California (putting $83,000 of his own money into the deal), and had later secured a government post, he "had never had a meeting in Mr. Meese's office" between the two events. In a testimony richly larded with "I cannot recall" and "at that point in time," this assertion was one of the few that Barrack made unambiguously. He added, "Did Mr. Meese ever talk to me about a job? Absolutely not."

Buried in the turgid and evasive text of the Stein report is clear proof that Barrack met at least three times with Meese between the house sale and his appointment as Deputy Under Secretary of the Interior. He met Meese in Washington on September 8, 1982, one week after the sale. Stein records a letter concerning that meeting, in which Barrack thanks Meese for his "counsel and encouragement." Barrack maintains that this refers to a discussion about the possibility of his moving to New York, a city about which Meese knows nothing. He justifies the remark by "reference to a discussion with Mr. Meese of the problems involved in moving a family from the West Coast to the East, and Mr. Meese's assurances that the move was not a difficult one." Barrack was never asked why he would discuss his moving plans with Meese, or what he proposed to do on the East Coast. Meese, says the Stein report, "had no recollection of Mr. Barrack's September 8 visit to his office until he found and reviewed the letter in his files."

One month later, on November 9, Barrack dined with Meese and his wife at the 1789 Restaurant in Georgetown. That very afternoon, he had met with Transportation Secretary Drew Lewis and Housing and Urban Development Secretary Samuel Pierce. Next day, he was due to see Interior Secretary James Watt and Energy Secretary Donald Hodel. This blissful round was to culminate on November 11 with an appointment with Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige. Two weeks previously, E. Pendleton James, former director of personnel at the White House and another principal in the La Mesa house sale, had written to each of the above, urging that Barrack's talents be recognized, adding, "I should mention that Ed Meese knows Tom and I'm sure also would endorse my strong support."

Barrack and the Meeses maintain that they endured a dinner between these two hectic rounds of meetings without ever alluding to the vulgar subject of a job for "Tom." They supposedly preserved the same reticence over Thanksgiving, which the Meeses passed agreeably enough at the Barrack ranch in Santa Barbara. As the Stein report noncommittally puts it:

> Mr. Barrack had by this time accepted the position of Deputy Undersecretary of Interior and was planning to begin his work in Washington on December 1, about one week later. He stated that he instructed his staff at the ranch not to mention this fact in the Meeses' presence.

He told the *help* but not Meese? Why would the help bring the question up? On December 2, 1982, the day after he assumed his duties at Interior, Barrack went to Meese's birthday party at Meese's house. Again, it seems that he was too

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delicate to mention his own good fortune to the President's chief counsel, a man keenly interested in appointments.

In light of all this, Meese's earlier sworn testimony to the Judiciary Committee, and Barrack's too, seem to hover just on the safe side of perjury. But on one point, Meese can be said to have told the plain truth. The move from the West Coast to the East is, if you approach it in the right style, "not a difficult one." This brings us to . . .

§ *The Transition Trust.* On March 1, 1983, Meese replied to Judiciary Committee chair Strom Thurmond's indulgent question about the sacrifices he had made to serve his President by mentioning "the unanticipated expense of moving to Washington, D.C., none of which was reimbursed by the government." The next day, under equally soft questioning from Senator Orrin Hatch, Meese phrased the matter in a similar but not identical way:

> HATCH: And in addition to that, if I understand it, you had to pay all of your moving expenses as well?
> MEESE: That is right.
> HATCH: And all of the costs of bringing your family back here as well?
> MEESE: Yes, Senator.
> HATCH: And that all came out of your own pocket?
> MEESE: Yes, sir.

Facts can be dreary as hell, but as the Stein report shows, Meese received $10,000 for "moving expenses" from the Presidential Transition Trust. On Trust check number 1069, made out to Edwin Meese, the words "moving expenses" are crossed out and the words "consulting fees" inked in. It's not even clear whether Meese declared this income or had another of his nagging bouts of amnesia.

Again, this nifty little adjustment was unknown to the Judiciary Committee at the time of its hearings. So was the inelegant little shuffle that I'll call . . .

§ *The Promotion.* Did Meese pull strings to gain promotion to full colonel in the Army Reserve in 1983? Like the staunch soldier that he is, Meese prefers to blame the brass for his rapid rise through the ranks. At his confirmation hearings he boldly claimed that he was "a victim of the Army's bad judgment." In fact, the promotion presents another example of his failure to distinguish between public and private interest. And it underlines, once more, his lack of veracity on the stand.

On November 1, 1982, the Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, Lieut. Gen. Max Thurman, wrote a memorandum to the Chief of Staff, Gen. Edward C. Meyer. The memo stated that "constructive credit" for a course in national security management qualifying Meese for promotion to colonel could be granted only at the request of Meese or his commanding officer (Gen. Thomas Turnage, director of the Selective Service System). Such a request had to be approved by Gen. William Berkman, chief of the Army Reserve. General Thurman's memo advised against such approval, since Meese was taking the requisite course by correspondence and had not yet completed it. Generals Turnage and Berkman overruled Thurman, effectively raising Meese to full colonel. Turnage is described in the Stein report as "an acquaintance and former associate of Mr. Meese from California, who had been designated (though not yet confirmed) as Director of the Selective Service System." Stein points out too that very shortly after, General Berkman was nominated for a second four-year term as chief of the Army Reserve.

General Thurman's memorandum recommending against Meese's promotion was passed to Secretary of the Army John Marsh, who forwarded it to Meese. Meese says that he doesn't recall seeing it, but Stein records statements by Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger and by Marsh in which they recall the memo and say that Meese urged them to reappoint General Berkman.

Meese told the Judiciary Committee that he had no knowledge of any Army concern about his appointment receiving special treatment. Either he is lying or Secretaries Marsh and Weinberger are.

The contradictions in the three areas discussed above have not been put to Meese for explanation thus far. They should be. The matters are not trivial. But all one can find is complicity among the Republicans and resignation among the Democrats. The following Democrats sit on the Senate Judiciary Committee: Max Baucus, Joseph Biden, Robert Byrd, Dennis DeConcini, Howell Heflin, Edward Kennedy, Patrick Leahy and Howard Metzenbaum.

I telephoned all their offices last week. Leahy's staff told me that the Senator was too busy wondering whether he could "rank" on Intelligence or Agriculture and feared that a new controversy over Meese would be "seen as counterproductive." Biden's people assured me that "most senators were off campaigning" when the Stein report came out. Heflin's office said: "It's too early—the members have not focused. It's the same nomination." Still others refused to comment or spoke of the psychological effect of the Reagan victory or said "in terms of" or "with regards to" all the time. Kennedy was on his way to Ethiopia when I called his office, but in his last statement on the matter he said, prematurely, that the Stein report had cleared Meese of any suspicion of impropriety and that such "questions" as remained were about civil and human rights. As we went to press, Common Cause issued an analysis of the Stein report which, though it did not correlate Stein's evidence with the transcript of the committee hearings, found against Meese on ethical grounds. Media attention to this was slight.

Only from Howard Metzenbaum's office has there been any sign of an understanding that this is the next Attorney General we're talking about. Now the Reaganites are going around Washington telling all who will listen that Metzenbaum made the HUAC enemies list back in 1954. Meese will probably have "no recollection" of that little gambit either.

One of three things could now happen. The President may, as he should, blushingly withdraw Meese from nomination. The Judiciary Committee or the full Senate may vote him down. Or, in the lazy belief that they asked all the right questions the first time, the ten Republicans and eight Democrats on the committee may nod into office, as "the People's Attorney" and the nation's chief law officer, a man who has already shown that he cannot recognize a conflict of interest when it bites him in the leg.

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The Heartbreak of Analysis

EDWARD SOREL

REMEMBER LAST FRIDAY WHEN I CALLED OFF ALL MY APPOINTMENTS BECAUSE MY COLD HAD AFFECTED MY HEARING?
WELL, I COULDN'T REACH THAT JOHNSON WOMAN AND SHE SHOWED UP IN SUCH A STATE THAT I DIDN'T DARE TELL HER I COULDN'T HEAR.
SO WE STARTED OUR SESSION AND WHEN I SAW SHE HAD STOPPED TALKING I'D SAY THINGS LIKE, "I SEE" OR "THAT MAY BE SIGNIFICANT."
BY THE END OF THE SESSION SHE SEEMED CALMER... SO I FELT THAT I HAD DONE THE RIGHT THING
WELL, TODAY SHE SHOWS UP LOOKING ABSOLUTELY RADIANT AND SAYS FRIDAY'S SESSION WAS A GREAT BREAKTHROUGH!
SHE SAYS SHE FEELS "WHOLE" FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HER LIFE...AND THAT SHE OWES IT ALL TO ME!!
I FEEL LIKE SUCH A FRAUD.
THERE, THERE DARLING, DON'T BE SO HARD ON YOURSELF...
...AFTER ALL, YOU ALWAYS SAID THAT PSYCHOANALYSIS WASN'T AN EXACT SCIENCE
Edward Sorel

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DISPATCHES.

■ UNITED STATES: Wick's Last Tapes

Aside from Labor Secretary Raymond Donovan, the Administration official who has caused President Reagan the greatest embarrassment is Charles Z. Wick, director of the United States Information Agency. In Reagan's first term, the press reported that Wick had given jobs to the children of Cabinet members, had secretly tape-recorded his telephone conversations and had ordered the U.S.I.A. to maintain a blacklist of liberals who would not be sent abroad under the agency's auspices (among those banned, Senator Gary Hart and Walter Cronkite).

Wick most likely will remain director during Reagan's second term, even though the agency is "a shambles," as one official there told "Dispatches." Wick's attitude is one of the major problems, as revealed in the transcripts of his dictaphone notes recently obtained by Scott Armstrong of *The Washington Post* under the Freedom of Information Act. The transcripts cover most of Wick's tenure in office, and though heavily sanitized, they amount to a daily diary of his misadventures. Here are some highlights:

§ In April 1981 Wick noted that he had had a long talk with Attorney General William French Smith about the "internal threat to our security" posed by "liberalism."

§ Three months later, in all seriousness, Wick reminded himself to contact "Arnaud de Borchgrave pursuant to Al Bloomingdale's [the late crony of the President] suggestion that we should have a reporting system from the various college campuses, who are at the scene [*sic*] now of revolutionary cells being established."

§ After Amnesty International issued a report critical of human rights in El Salvador, Wick asked, "How can we get some investigations of Amnesty International to see whether they can or should be discredited?"

Wick is convinced that criticism of U.S. foreign policy stems from clever Soviet propaganda and disinformation campaigns. "My own view is that as one Southeast Asian leader remarked 'the Communists know how to use our media better than we do,'" he told his dictaphone. It is easy to understand why he thinks that way. As the transcripts make clear, Wick's world is largely inhabited by the likes of Rupert Murdoch, William Casey, Axel Springer, Roy Cohn, Richard Mellon Scaife, the Heritage and Olin Foundations, the Hoover Institution—a veritable Who's Who of the moneyed right.

■ SAUDI ARABIA: The Oil Money Runs Out

Since the 1950s, whenever dissatisfaction was brewing in the kingdom, Saudi monarchs have sought to defuse it by promising to create a representative body to help them govern. Now that the Saudis are facing their first recession in thirty years and the political pot is beginning to perk, King Fahd al-Saud has made the ritualistic pledge to temper his absolute rule with an elected "consultative assembly."

"It is not necessary to be a radical to see room for progress and reform in the Kingdom," wrote the U.S. Embassy's political officer in Jidda in a confidential Airgram to the State Department dated May 21, 1979. The officer's analysis is as accurate today as when it was written. It and other classified documents can be found in Volume 35 of *Captured Documents*, published by the Iranians who seized the U.S. Embassy in 1979:

> Recent measures intended to preserve the Islamic traditions of Saudi Arabia are mostly ineffective attempts to stop a stronger and deeper current in the opposite direction. . . . The government has responded to these threats by a series of temporizing measures which will not deal with the forces for change but which will, it hopes, placate the religious conservatives.
>
> . . . it will need to do much more than install darkened glass on girls' school bus windows.
>
> . . .
>
> Some thoughtful Saudis are asking whether they (the Saudis) should become a permanently unproductive class whose main function will be signing checks for foreigners.
>
> . . .
>
> Corruption is still a problem. . . . it is not certain that the [royal] family possesses enough internal discipline to control the acquisitiveness of some of its members.

The letter was written at the height of concern among U.S. officials that a wave of Khomeini-inspired radicalism might sweep through the conservative states of the Persian Gulf. That did not happen, but King Fahd's ability to maintain the status quo has declined as the Saudi economic pie has shrunk. In the last three years, his country's oil revenues have fallen from $110 billion annually to $40 billion, and several hundred Saudi companies have closed their doors. With the economy sputtering, some of the "poorer" princes, not to mention millions of commoners, are sure to look with increased resentment on the immense wealth of the few major business families.

(Note: Volumes of *Captured Documents* are on file with the Washington-based newspaper *Iran Times* and in the Library of Congress.)

■ AUSTRALIA: Atomic-Test Deaths

Before John Philip Burke died of cancer last spring, at 63, he told Australian officials and the press a startling story. As a Royal Air Force technician assigned to the British atomic tests conducted in the South Australian desert in 1963, Burke discovered the bodies of four Aborigines in a bomb crater after one in a series of three nuclear tests at the Maralinga test site. He believed that the people had died of radiation poisoning. The detonation area was marked only by a barbed wire fence patrolled by a single police officer.

For years Aboriginal groups have charged that some of their people died of radiation sickness caused by British nuclear tests conducted from 1952 to 1967. The Australian government recently decided to allow those who had been removed from the Maralinga site for the tests to return to their homeland, and Burke told reporters he had spoken out because he feared the returnees might become contaminated from radioactive wastes buried there. His fears were well

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KAI BIRD AND MAX HOLLAND

founded according to a recently declassified 1967 British government document known as the Pearce report, which describes how plutonium wastes were plowed into the desert during the post-test "cleanup." Quantities of cobalt 60, used in "dirty" (enhanced radiation) bombs, were buried in lead pots. That means the British were experimenting with a neutron bomb as early as 1963.

The Pearce report explains that the 1963 tests were "minor trials" of conventional chemical explosions designed to rain plutonium over a wide area. In response to official Australian queries, the British have said they have "no evidence available" that anyone was killed during the Maralinga tests. London claims the plutonium dispersal was confined to an area of a few hundred square meters.

Unsatisfied, the Australians have set up an investigative commission. John Hutton, a former lance corporal who was stationed in Maralinga at the time, told the commission that after one test in 1957, soldiers discovered a family of four that had spent two nights in a bomb crater. Found to be contaminated, they were given showers and released. Hutton says a British officer threatened him with thirty years in jail if he spoke of the incident to anyone.

■ WEST GERMANY: The Flick Scandal

Eberhard von Brauchitsch used to manage West Germany's largest family business, the Flick Group. Manufacturers of explosives, tanks and bathtubs, among other items, last year Flick had revenues of more than $4 billion. Von Brauchitsch had a habit of keeping meticulous records of his transactions, and it was those neatly filed notes that precipitated the downfall of Speaker of the Bundestag Rainer Barzel and Economic Minister Count Otto von Lambsdorff, as well as his own dismissal from the firm.

Von Brauchitsch's files record that both Barzel and von Lambsdorff took enormous sums given them by Flick subsidiaries. Barzel was paid some $680,000 allegedly to clear the way for Helmut Kohl to become the Christian Democrats' leader. Von Lambsdorff accepted Flick money on behalf of his Free Democrat Party at the very time the government was giving Flick a tax exemption worth millions of dollars on its sale of Daimler-Benz stock.

Little is known about how Friedrich Karl Flick runs his companies. A retiring man, Flick avoids his group's Düsseldorf headquarters and instead issues orders from his home in Bavaria to a few trusted managers, until recently including von Brauchitsch.

Although von Brauchitsch and Flick were schoolmates and had worked together since 1960, they have not always got along. Von Brauchitsch left briefly in the early 1970s to work with right-wing publishing magnate Axel Springer. He returned in 1972, reputedly only after a deathbed request by Flick's father that he be rehired. (The elder Friedrich Flick was a Nazi war criminal, convicted of using 48,000 slave laborers, 80 percent of whom died, in his factories. He served a short prison sentence after the war.)

Despite his dismissal in late 1982 and federal investigations into the estimated $10 million in payments Flick made to various West German politicians, von Brauchitsch remains on the boards of directors of at least a dozen other firms. No doubt he thought the payments funneled to the politicians would stem what he has called a tide of socialism in Germany. So far, the only politicians certifiably untainted by Flick money are the Greens.

■ BANGLADESH: Involuntary Sterilization

When asked, the international agencies assisting the Bangladesh government in its population-control programs explain their role more or less as follows: International donors are helping the government of Bangladesh in a variety of family-planning services, including the construction of health offices, the dissemination of educational materials and the promotion of contraceptive methods, including voluntary sterilization. Nothing controversial there.

But a January 1984 letter which "Dispatches" obtained provides a revealing glimpse of the thinking of at least one official in the donors' bureaucracy. The letter, labeled "Strictly Confidential," was written by Walter Holzhausen, the Dacca representative of the U.N. Fund for Population Activities, to his superior in New York, Dr. Nafis Sadik. Copies were sent to other agencies involved, including the U.N. Development Program, the U.S. Agency for International Development and the World Bank. While Holzhausen allows that his views may be "too advanced," he argues that the concept of voluntary sterilization should be reconsidered because of "realities prevailing in some developing countries such as Bangladesh." From the letter:

> None of the donors would [like] to be associated with a more forceful programme, particularly not the Scandinavian countries. . . . And yet, most donor representatives here greatly admire the Chinese for their achievements; a success story brought about by massive direct and indirect compulsion.
>
> On the Bangladesh Government side, too, the voluntary nature of the family planning effort is constantly asserted . . . partly because no-one dares to openly talk differently. . . . I notice the intellectual dishonesty: for also Government officials constantly speak with admiration and envy of the Chinese successes. . . . you hear the almost unanimous view that drastic action is needed and that a new dimension needs to be added to the current "voluntary" programme. . .
>
> Thus having a large family in Bangladesh is anti-social and contrary to the common weal and hence, a matter that deserves drastic Government intervention.
>
> It is time for donors to get away from too narrow an interpretation of the concept of voluntarism.

The extent to which U.N., World Bank and A.I.D. officials share Holzhausen's views is not known. [See *The Nation*, Betsy Hartmann and Jane Hughes, "And the Poor Get Sterilized," June 30; and World Bank information officer Frank Vogl, "Letters," November 24, with Hartmann and Hughes's reply.] But Holzhausen's letter shows that at least some officials in the international aid agencies are drifting toward an endorsement of compulsory sterilization.

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ARTICLES.

COUNTDOWN IN MANILA

Marcos Declines, Opposition Builds

A. LIN NEUMANN

Manila

It seemed as much a comic whodunit as the throes of a nation in crisis. In mid-November President Ferdinand Marcos was missing, and rumors were flying: The President was in Houston for open-heart surgery; the President was at Stanford University Medical Center for a kidney transplant; the President was dead; the President was on board his yacht en route to Australia; a team of foreign doctors had taken over the presidential palace to tinker with the old man's innards.

Finally, a leak from the inner circle disclosed that an operation *had* been performed, in Manila, probably on his kidneys which had been damaged by systemic lupus erythematosus. It was thought the President might yet have to venture abroad for treatment.

The government refused to confirm the report. It maintained throughout that Marcos was suffering from the flu and had been placed in what was called "reverse isolation" to protect him from germs. The government aired a videotape showing him in good health, but the press identified it as old footage. First Lady Imelda Marcos told some reporters, "No one in his right mind or her right mind would try and keep this from the people. If the President is sick, I'll tell you. I promise."

Then, on December 8, Marcos bared his chest on television to scotch rumors that he had undergone heart surgery. But the fact remains the President *is* sick. Marcos's illness, coming at a time of pervasive economic crisis and evidence of a military conspiracy in the 1983 slaying of Benigno Aquino, has dramatized the fragility not just of the chief executive but of the entire government.

Indeed, most observers say that the government is hardly functioning. The communist insurgents of the New People's Army are gaining adherents rapidly in the countryside; in the cities, the left controls the trade unions and orchestrates protest demonstrations. Cabinet ministers quibble openly about succession; bankers have made it clear they have lost confidence in the regime's ability to enforce a package of harsh austerity measures mandated by the International Monetary Fund in September; and the moderate opposition has failed to come up with a candidate to succeed Marcos or a platform to govern by. The best guess anyone has on the outcome of the governmental crisis that will inevitably follow Marcos's demise is that a juntalike "working committee," as one Cabinet member called it, will oversee the succession process. According to a law Marcos rushed through earlier in 1984, the Speaker of the National Assembly, Nicanor Yniguez, would serve as interim chief for a sixty-day period, during which time an election would be held and a new president installed. But most here believe that the working committee, composed of key Cabinet members and Imelda Marcos, would exercise the powers of state during the interregnum.

The Marcos regime is a deft practitioner of survival tactics. Nothing demonstrated that more clearly than its manipulation of the fact-finding board's report on the assassination of Aquino. When it became apparent to the President's coterie that the board, chaired by former Justice Corazon Agrava, was applying itself seriously to the task of uncovering the military conspiracy behind the killing, it took action. Indirect pressures were brought to bear on members of the board, and according to sources on the panel, only Agrava succumbed. She stonewalled on the most important issue: the role played by Gen. Fabian Ver, the Armed Forces Chief of Staff and one of the President's most trusted men.

On October 23, Agrava filed a separate opinion exonerating Ver and confining the conspiracy to a lower-ranking general and six soldiers. The President accepted the Agrava version in a public ceremony, giving it equal status with the majority opinion, which named Ver and which was released a day later. Only U.S. pressure and the fear of a public backlash kept Marcos from burying the majority report altogether. In a letter to Ver, the President said it was "fraught with doubt and great contradictions." One diplomat called the investigation a farce and predicted Ver would be acquitted if the case came to trial, along with many of the twenty-five officers and enlisted men named by the majority.

So far no one has been indicted. The case is now in the hands of an ombudsman's office, which has the power only to make recommendations to a special court created during the martial law period to hear cases involving corruption. The court has not tried anyone above the rank of captain. Since all its members, including three judges rushed to the bench in September, are presidential appointees, there is considerable skepticism about the likelihood of a trial taking place. Thus Marcos's maneuvers have accomplished one thing: the Aquino case has been taken away from the demonstrators in the streets and dropped into Manila's legal maze, perhaps never to be heard from again. Most observers here feel that the Agrava board's unexpectedly bold findings will take the steam out of the middle-class protest demonstrations.

Marcos's impatient overseers in the American Embassy secured a boon from the process. Ver had to go, not so much for his possible complicity in the crime but for his lackluster leadership of the armed forces. Diplomatic observers have pointed out repeatedly that continued

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growth of the insurgent forces is partly attributable to the ineffectiveness and brutality of the military. The man running the show while Ver is on indefinite leave, Gen. Fidel Ramos, a 1950 graduate of West Point, is said to be forthright and honest—the antithesis of his predecessor. He has close ties to the opposition and the Catholic Church. "I can rest easier knowing Ramos is there," said the editor of a prominent opposition newspaper. Ramos has U.S. support and the confidence of moderates in the government. What he lacks, however, is the power to reform the corruption-riddled military. At a press conference Ramos admitted that Marcos zealously supervises the military structure and must approve all major appointments. As for instituting major changes, he said, "I do not have the authority."

That authority may be in the offing, however. A Cabinet minister said that Ramos would head the working committee in the event of Marcos's death and "would guarantee that the Constitution will be followed."

But a host of uncertainties remain. According to insiders, Imelda Marcos wants to be president, and she could move behind the scenes to secure the position de facto. She and a tight circle of advisers, including her brother, control access to Marcos. A majority of the nation's generals are Ver loyalists, and his primary allegiance is to the First Family. Other powerful presidential cronies—most notably, coconut baron Eduardo Cojuangco—maintain private armies and vast sums of money which could come into play in a succession struggle.

The moderates in the business community and their American allies fear that when Marcos is gone, his coalition will disintegrate in the battle for the spoils. The U.S. Embassy has sought to counter what it calls the "wrong impressions" conveyed by Reagan's statement in the second Presidential debate that the only alternative to Marcos is "a large communist movement," but hard-liners here took it as a sign of encouragement.

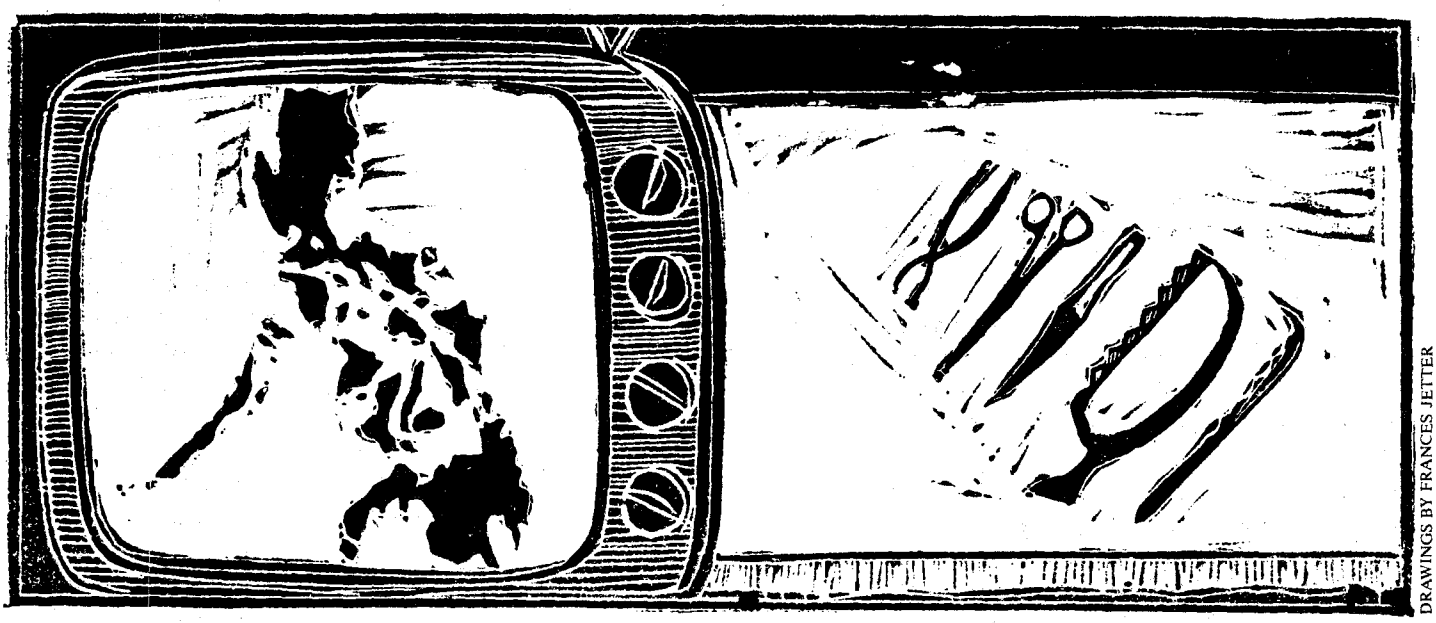
Of course, a takeover by the right—led, say, by Imelda Marcos—would most benefit the communists. Regardless of what happens, leaders of the left, which includes religious groups, students, workers, peasants and the guerrillas, are confident that the nation's economic troubles and the pace of both urban and rural mass actions is certain to keep the revolution on track. The New People's Army, with some 15,000 fighters, is operating throughout the islands and, according to diplomatic estimates, exercises a measure of control over 20 percent of the nation's villages.

In the cities, the National Democratic Front, a broad coalition of leftist and communist groups and representatives from different sectors of Philippine society, controls the timing and strategy of street protests. One of its leaders has said that 1985 would be a time of consolidation for the movement. The opposition intends to emphasize the economic hardships people are suffering and to concentrate its organizing efforts among workers, peasants and students. With interest in the Aquino assassination fading, said the source, "We have to project the issues of the masses" and downplay middle-class concerns.

One reminder of those issues was the successful transit strike in Cebu and Davao, the Philippines' second- and third-largest cities, respectively, precipitated by an increase in gasoline prices and held the week the Agrava report was released. The strikes paralyzed those urban centers, and underground leaders regard them as a model for future urban activism.

With its revolutionary rhetoric and proclaimed devotion to the poor, the Philippine left is fast becoming a genuine threat to Marcos and the moderates. "This country needs a revolution," said one diplomat. "We would like to see a White revolution, but if we are not careful we will get a Red revolution."

With growing disarray in the government at a time of change and upheaval, the left will be well positioned to carry out its timetable for insurrection. Sources in the Communist Party say that if all goes according to plan, within five years it will establish a coalition government made up of representatives from business, labor and other segments of society, patterned after the government set up in Nicaragua following the revolution.



DRAWINGS BY FRANCES JETTER

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By concentrating power at the top, Marcos made that goal possible, if not exactly probable. When he declared martial law in 1972 (it was lifted in 1981), he replaced much of the traditional local leadership with functionaries whose loyalty was to the central government. That system has been unable to gain the respect of the people in the countryside, where the leadership vacuum is increasingly being filled by the guerrillas. Filipinos blame the central government for abuses by the military (troop strength has been increased to six times what it was before martial law) and for the corruption of local officials.

The United States finds itself in the unenviable position of being linked to that government. Despite a born-again faith in the democratic opposition, it bears the onus of having supported Marcos virtually without reservation before the Aquino assassination. The embassy's dire predictions about the growth of the left have served to underscore the United States' increasing vulnerability. And with two major U.S. military installations in the Philippines—Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Base—the stakes are high.

The circuslike way Marcos's illness was handled by the regime and the uncertainties of the succession process have done little to instill confidence in the future of the Philippines as a U.S. ally. The country was kept on the diplomatic back burner for too long, its problems masked by authoritarian rule. Although it has now become a high-priority crisis spot, that won't make America's choices any easier, nor will it increase the chances for a peaceful resolution of the situation. □

PALESTINE NATIONAL COUNCIL

Al Fatah Is Now Running the Show

SCOTT MacLEOD

Amman, Jordan

If there was a winner at the seventeenth session of the Palestine National Council, held in the Jordanian capital from November 22 through 29, it was not Yasir Arafat. It was Al Fatah, the guerrilla group Arafat helped found twenty-five years ago. While Arafat did achieve a personal triumph in Amman, it was the Central Council of Al Fatah, on which he sits, that held the annual meeting of the Palestinian parliament-in-exile despite pressure from Syria (which allegedly included threats against delegates and their families) and the decision by two rebel groups, the National Alliance and the Democratic Alliance, to boycott the meeting.

Al Fatah's inner circle decided to convene the council in early November, when it became clear that Syrian President Hafez al-Assad had no intention of halting his campaign to depose Arafat, whom he despises and perceives as an obstacle to his goal of controlling the P.L.O. The National Alliance, a coalition of four guerrilla groups based in Syrian-occupied Lebanon, echoed Assad's views. It includes followers of Col. Said Musa (nom de guerre, Abu Musa), who seceded from Al Fatah, and members of Ahmad Jibril's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine–General Command, which has strong Libyan backing.

While the National Alliance's absence was a foregone conclusion, the role the leftist Democratic Alliance would play was uncertain. Its principal component groups are George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Nayef Hawatmeh's Democratic Front. While the two men agree with the National Alliance's complaint that Arafat has become dictatorial and that he was wrong to abandon armed struggle, they remain neutral in the feud between him and Assad. Habash and Hawatmeh still regard Arafat as the symbolic leader of the Palestinian movement and do not think he should be deposed. Also, they feel that for the sake of unity the P.L.O. should not become a Syrian puppet.

In June, Al Fatah and the Democratic Alliance signed the Aden-Algiers Agreement, in which they expressed a desire to "forget past mistakes" and called for a meeting of the National Council. Arafat's populist instincts told him he would have sufficient support at the session to win approval of his leadership and his program. But Habash and Hawatmeh were unable to sell the agreement in Damascus, where they are based, and compelled by Syria, they withdrew their promises to attend.

Faced with the dilemma of whether to hold the meeting without Habash, Hawatmeh and the National Alliance, Al Fatah decided to press ahead. That was a watershed in P.L.O. history. No longer would small factions retain a veto over policy, as they had in the past. If Al Fatah continues to follow the principle of majority rule rather than decision by consensus, the result may be a P.L.O. steered by the moderate views of the mainstream members rather than those of the radicals, who held sway during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

There is no doubt, however, that the seventeenth session was dominated by Al Fatah, which pushed through several measures that could set the P.L.O. on a more pragmatic course. The delegates approved a subtly worded political platform giving the National Council's fourteen-member Executive Committee, chaired by Arafat, wider latitude in making concessions in exchange for a Middle East settlement that would satisfy at least some aspirations of the Palestinian people. Al Fatah also won acceptance of a significant resolution regarding Egypt. Only twenty-one months earlier, delegates to the sixteenth session had passed a resolution tacitly calling for aid to "patriotic" groups in Egypt opposed to the Camp David process endorsed by President Hosni Mubarak. Understandably angered, the Egyptian leader retaliated by torpedoing the P.L.O.'s plan to open a radio station in Cairo. But in Amman, the National Council reversed its position and endorsed Arafat's December 1983 trip to Cairo, calling it an important step toward "strengthening relations," and every top official in

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attendance went on record in support of closer ties with Egypt.

Another important resolution authorized the Executive Committee to continue talks with Jordan's King Hussein aimed at developing a joint strategy for a Middle East peace process. Such an approach was a key element of President Reagan's September 1982 peace plan for the region. At the time, Arafat made some halting, ambiguous moves in that direction, but he abandoned his discussions with Hussein in April 1983 under pressure from Syria and the P.L.O. dissidents who, a month later, launched an armed uprising against him in Lebanon.

By reaffirming Arafat's leadership and passing resolutions he favored, the council session did provide him a personal victory of sorts. But it came at the price of a concession to demands for more collective leadership. Even the Fatah inner circle had become disenchanted with Arafat's high-handed Lone Ranger style, as evidenced by its Central Council's 10-to-1 vote to censure him in 1983 for going to Cairo. The final decision on whether to hold the meeting rested with the Fatah leadership rather than with Arafat alone. "If any one of us in the Central Council, for example myself, had not wanted the P.N.C. to be held, it would not have been held," Al Fatah's number-two leader, Salah Khalaf (Abu Iyad), told me. "In reality, and on a deeper level, Arafat knows he cannot proceed on his own."

The leadership that emerged in Amman is controlled by Al Fatah and thus is more homogeneous than in the past. Still, it could succumb to the paralysis of will that has previously stalled the P.L.O. leadership. The Executive Committee's first test will come with its handling of the factionalism in the organization. The Palestine National Council, which is the P.L.O.'s governing body, directed it to seek a reconciliation with Habash and Hawatmeh, as well as with President Assad. The danger is that the task may be so consuming that the committee will become bogged down, delaying diplomatic moves toward a Middle East settlement.

Al Fatah has already expelled the leaders of the National Alliance as traitors, but dealing with Hawatmeh and Habash is a different matter. They are popular figures, founding fathers of the armed resistance against Israel; and they have important ties to Marxist regimes and movements around the world on which the P.L.O. relies for money, prestige and arms.

Nor can Syria be ignored, though some in Al Fatah wish that it could. It is the only frontline state that permits Palestinian guerrillas to operate on its territory, albeit under close supervision and only in Syrian-controlled Lebanon. According to Khalaf, Al Fatah will make no concessions to Damascus, and Habash and Hawatmeh may be asked to move their headquarters out of that city if they wish to regain their former prestige within the P.L.O. Four seats on the Executive Committee have been kept open for them should they desire to return to the fold. "The ball is in their court," Khalaf says.

As for future peace efforts, King Hussein told the delegates that he stands ready to help. In a speech that was remarkable for its candor, the King signaled Jordan's willingness to play a more active role in achieving a Middle East peace agreement. "The picture is bleak," he said. "Things appear difficult at the moment." Regretting the "time we have wasted on disagreement, conflict and recrimination," he said it was time to be flexible and cast aside outworn slogans.

Hussein called for Jordan and the P.L.O. to draft a joint peace initiative aimed at recovering the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. While his proposal for an international peace conference in which the P.L.O. would be a full participant pleased the delegates, they bridled at his endorsement of U.N. Security Council Resolution 242. The P.L.O. opposes the resolution because while it calls on Israel to return the occupied territories, it does not recognize the Palestinians' right to a separate state, which continues to be the organization's chief objective.

While favorably inclined to resume talks with Hussein, P.L.O. leaders also see the possibility of playing the "Egyptian card" once diplomatic ties are restored. Hussein's decision to become the first Arab head of state to restore diplo-

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Alexander Cockburn on the PRESS.
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Mindy Aloff on DANCE.
Christopher Hitchens on WASHINGTON.
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matic relations with Egypt increases the chance for a more moderate Arab approach to negotiations with Israel and the United States. Whether Arafat and the regrouped P.L.O. will make sincere and concrete moves toward a negotiated peace settlement may ultimately depend on opportunities provided by those two countries. In the last go-round, in late 1982 and early 1983, when Hussein was earnestly pursuing the Reagan proposals, Washington did little to assure him that Israel would be forthcoming with concessions if he took the enormous risk of announcing his intention to negotiate with Israel on the P.L.O.'s behalf. Menachem Begin's Likud government, it should be recalled, rejected the Reagan plan the day after it was announced. At the time Arafat and Hussein broke off their talks, the pace of Jewish settlement of the West Bank continued unabated and Israeli troops still occupied a third of Lebanon. Later in the year, the Reagan Administration upset the Arab nations by signing a strategic and military cooperation agreement with Israel.

By proposing an international peace conference, Hussein has adopted an idea first advanced by the Soviet Union, and rejected by the United States and Israel. That he should do so is but the latest expression of Arab disillusionment with Washington. □

CITIZEN UTILITY BOARDS

People Power vs. Power Companies

ALFIE KOHN

The search for good news from the election leads to Oregon. Voters in that state approved the nation's fourth Citizen Utility Board (CUB), which may represent the most promising movement in utility reform this side of public ownership.

In most places, individuals hand over more money to utilities than they do taxes to the state's treasury. Gas companies underestimate demand and have to buy excess fuel at inflated prices. Electric companies pour capital into nuclear power plants and then abandon the projects, charging customers for their mistakes. More routinely, a utility company asks its state regulator for a rate hike several times greater than what it expects to get; the Public Service Commission trims the request a bit, and both sides go home happy, leaving the ratepayer to pick up the tab. Adding insult to injury, customers are usually forced to pay "rate case expenses," the amount spent by the utility to argue for the increase.

Despite those indignities, efforts to change the system have lacked energy and consistent direction. Citizen groups occasionally field their own intervenors in a case, lobby for legislation or propose that regulators be elected rather than

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appointed. But there has been little in the way of reform of the process by which utilities set their rates.

Until CUBs came along, that is. Inspired by Ralph Nader and his acolytes in the mid-1970s, the boards hire experts to represent residential ratepayers in various ways, lobbying and advocating their case at rate hearings, for example. Funded and controlled by those who belong to it, a CUB receives no government assistance—only the right to piggyback its membership solicitations on utility bill mailings.

On Election Day, 53 percent of Oregon's voters approved the establishment of a CUB in their state. The Oregon State Public Interest Research Group (OSPIRG) spent about $40,000 in behalf of the initiative, while utilities poured more than $1 million into a slick radio, TV and direct-mail campaign to portray it as a "boondoggle." The latter's effort, which began in September and in which the utilities attempted to conceal their role behind a front organization, backfired. "Their ad campaign succeeded in creating visibility for us," Eric Stachon of OSPIRG said recently.

Oregon is the first state to pass a CUB initiative by referendum. State Legislatures set up CUBs in Wisconsin and Illinois in 1979 and 1983, respectively, and California's Public Utility Commission formed a local version in San Diego in 1983. CUB legislation was introduced in ten states this year, and the prospects for passage seem particularly good in Massachusetts.

Rising electricity and gas rates aren't the only reasons the CUB idea is finding favor across the country. As the Center for the Study of Responsive Law and other public interest groups promoting CUBs point out, utilities get the rate hikes they seek because Public Service Commissions usually hear only one side of the story. A commission sees itself as a quasi-judicial body, arbitrating between competing claims. A utility can afford to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on economists, engineers and other experts to present its case. It will spare no expense on those hearings because so much is riding on them and because its costs are ultimately borne by ratepayers. Across the hearing room from this three-piece-suited battalion is, depending on the state and the importance of the issue, an assistant attorney general, an appointed government intervenor, a lawyer for a local public interest group or, as in Oregon, no one at all. Thus if rate hikes are approved routinely, it may be because regulators never hear a good argument for rejecting them.

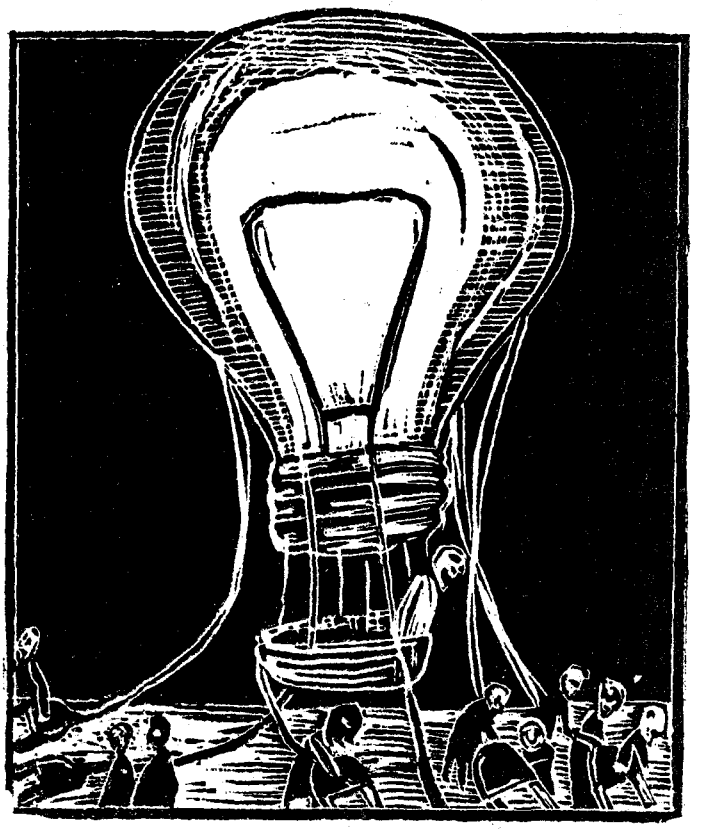
The spoils claimed by the utilities don't end with higher rates. The vast majority of states have enacted automatic fuel adjustment clauses that permit surcharges to be levied on customers before a hearing is held, or with no hearing at all. Most states allow electric utilities to charge their customers for construction work in progress, which amounts to paying for power they will theoretically receive in the future. Finally, utilities are universally permitted to collect money for "phantom taxes" (taxes they overestimate and ultimately don't have to pay), which cost electric utility customers almost $5.1 billion in 1982, according to a study conducted by the Environmental Action Foundation. Arguably, such practices flourish because citizens lack adequate representation in the hearing rooms where they are approved.

Many states have government-appointed consumer counsels, but they are to the utilities' representatives as public defenders are to the ritzy corporate lawyers. Also, they are vulnerable to political pressure. Brian Lederer, an aggressive public advocate in Washington, D.C., was ousted in 1983 by Mayor Marion Barry Jr., apparently for his effectiveness at challenging the utilities. According to Mark Green and Michael Waldman, writing in *The Village Voice*, when New York's Consumer Protection Board began organizing consumers in opposition to a rate hike request by the Niagra Mohawk Power Company, the State Senate lopped $50,000 from the board's computer budget. Unlike government intervenors, "a Citizen Utility Board isn't in jeopardy when it starts making waves," says Tom Tobin, who is coordinating CUB campaigns around the country. "What's more, a CUB is directly accountable to consumers; it's got the resources to do a crack job on a number of cases, and it can do public education and lobbying. All of this makes it more powerful than any public agency or board."

One naturally looks to Wisconsin for information on how well the boards work, since it was the first state to have one. Attracted by eye-catching CUB leaflets ("ARE YOU MAD AS *&#!% ABOUT HIGH UTILITY BILLS?") accompanying their utility bills, 27,000 people joined during the first year of operation, and membership has more than quadrupled since then.

The annual budget of $719,000 has been put to work in a way that has won plaudits even from skeptics. The board's claim to have saved ratepayers about $100 for every dollar contributed proves to be more than puffery, and utility officials grudgingly concede its effectiveness. Consider:

§ CUB-sponsored testimony played a decisive role in



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defeating both automatic fuel adjustment charges and Wisconsin Telephone's request for local measured service.

§ The CUB persuaded the Public Service Commission to assess consumers' ability to pay higher utility rates and then take that into account for all future rate increases—a ground-breaking policy.

§ Clever cross-examination of Wisconsin Telephone officials proved that the financial indexes used by the company to win a previous increase in its rates had since improved. As a direct result of this strategy the commission, which had seemed sympathetic to another increase, denied the request.

Despite the success in Wisconsin, or perhaps because of it, getting the necessary legislation in other states has not been easy. In Illinois the legislators acted on a CUB initiative only after 111 cities and towns had approved it by a margin of at least two to one. Oregon's referendum effort was mounted because the legislature had killed a CUB bill. A few powerful state senators in New York have refused to allow pertinent legislation out of committee, so proponents are applying to the Public Service Commission instead. The commission has already endorsed the idea of establishing a board in New York, but utilities are suing to block implementation.

Progress is being made, however. Each year, CUB bills are introduced in more states and get a little further in those states where they are already before the legislature. In Massachusetts, for example, the Public Interest Research Group has signed on 105 legislative co-sponsors, and the bill could come to a vote before long. A CUB for Pacific Gas & Electric's customers in California may be established soon, and Montana's Public Service Commission is seriously considering a CUB proposal as well.

Besides their significance in utility reform, according to Tobin and his colleagues, Citizen Utility Boards signal a consumer revolution, a decisive step toward the empowerment of citizens. If corporate interests are developing a nervous twitch as they watch the growing popularity of CUBs, it is understandable: the architects are happily sketching plans for organizations that would guarantee consumer representation on insurance and banking issues, using a similar procedure for funding. □

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LEARNING AND THE LEFT

Who Cares About The Humanities?

LEONARD KRIEGEL

Higher education in this nation is in trouble. That is the message sounded in a plethora of reports, articles, books and talk shows on the state of American colleges and universities. Academics seem haunted by a sense of failure that is growing more and more pervasive. Even those of us who do not talk about it wonder whether democratized higher education—once one of this nation's proudest boasts and most envied successes—has evolved to something that is devoid of substance and is intellectually meretricious, in which vocational fashion threatens to swamp even the intellectual pieties of the past.

This is not the first crisis in American higher education, and I suspect it will not be the last. Toward the end of World War I, the iconoclastic economist Thorstein Veblen suggested that a university was a comparatively simple institution consisting of a faculty capable of teaching, students capable of learning and a library. For those of us who walk through the groves of academe today, Veblen's ironic description seems, if anything, idealistic. The ground we walk on is seedy and ill-kempt. The case against us does not even have to be proved; it simply has to be stated. Let others question; we judge. And our present judgment on the system we have helped create is that it is a failure.

Among the recent indictments of American higher education is *To Reclaim a Legacy*, a report by William J. Bennett, chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities and rumored to be the next Secretary of Education. Bennett addresses himself to the dreary state of education in the humanities. For anyone who thinks of the humanities, as do Bennett and I, as the cornerstone of intellectual life in the

Leonard Kriegel is a professor of English and the director of the City College of New York's Center for Worker Education.

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Western world, the report should be welcome. It should also be viewed with deep and abiding suspicion—not because there is much in it that justifiably makes us uncomfortable but because there is too much that is left unsaid.

To some extent the seeming irrelevance of the humanities to American society is a consequence of the left's inability to make distinctions. Because we tend to see all cultural expression as a manifestation of political ideology, ideology itself has ceased to serve any definable purpose, except as a leveler of distinctions. As a result, cultural life is overwhelmed by nonsense. A little more than a decade ago Bob Dylan was being hailed as the nation's pre-eminent poet; Charles Reich, a professor of law at Yale University, wrote a book, *The Greening of America*, suggesting that all our problems could be solved if we ate organic peanut butter and learned to play basketball in jeans; literary criticism, which had given us the historical incisiveness of Edmund Wilson and the elegant textual analyses of the New Critics, was taken over by academic drones who called themselves Structuralists and then called themselves Deconstructionists and whose chief claim to fame was that they could make literature as dull as single-wing football.

Bennett is correct to point out that the main problem with education in the humanities is that it has been presented as a kind of spiritual potpourri to be gulped down by any potential customer who happens to get in line. Students, we professors told ourselves, were too busy or too free or too modern or simply too tired to read Chaucer and Shakespeare. In any case, Chaucer and Shakespeare were not necessarily what they should be reading. Cultural relativism was in; the traditional literary canon was out. At the vast majority of American colleges and universities, the traditional yearlong survey course in English literature was abandoned in the late 1960s because it was considered an expression of cultural imperialism.

To Bennett's credit, he resists the temptation to go after the students who, beginning in the 1960s, demanded "relevance" when what they really wanted was sleep. Like Pogo, he insists that the enemy is "us," teachers of the humanities who have "given up on the great task of transmitting a culture" in favor of offering a curriculum that is "a self-service cafeteria through which students pass without being nourished." Once we believed there was a body of common knowledge worth teaching and learning. Now we do not know what it is we are supposed to teach or why we are supposed to teach it. Bennett wishes to reverse the decline in the humanities and make their study the heart and soul of the college curriculum. As students were wont to say a few years ago, he knows "where he's coming from." Unfortunately, what he leaves out makes one suspect he knows where he is going, too.

Having myself managed to get through the 1960s and 1970s without being transformed into a disciple of the Great Communicator, I still share a great deal with Bennett. Like him, I believe in the centrality of humanistic education; like him, I associate such education primarily with Western thought and Western civilization; like him, too, I am unwilling to indict that civilization for everything from air pollution to the Sex Pistols. In fact, what most disturbs me about *To Reclaim a Legacy* is my belief that it should have been written by someone on the left. After all, the left once not only believed there was a common core to our intellectual heritage but wanted to spread that heritage. It was the left that favored education in the humanities for all; it was the left that wanted to make cultural life widely available. Unfortunately, we on the left no longer know what we want from cultural life, nor what we should demand from culture.

When those of us on the left called for cultural diversity, we questioned, justifiably at the time, the obeisance to Western culture that pervaded American colleges and universities. As a strategy for change, this was understandable; as cultural politics, it was disastrous. We found ourselves in the paradoxical position of denying that our disciplines had meaning, for we had dismissed, with a hyperbole that should make us blush, the essence of those disciplines. We approved of littering the curriculum with intellectual flotsam that should have enraged any teacher who still believed in the power of thought. Courses in the humanities became manifestations of race, of ethnicity, of regionalism or of class. And by allowing all values, all opinions, all feelings, all ideas—no matter how ridiculous or ill-conceived—to be considered equally, we made humanistic education a minor branch of what might be called "arts for living." Thus, no life is complete without having heard Beethoven's Seventh; without having been moved by Yoko's lament for John; without having read Hemingway and Heller; without having laughed at Aristophanes and Woody Allen; without having learned to become what college brochures call "a more well-rounded person." By denying the worth of the tradition that helped mold our lives, we allowed ourselves to be pushed to where we viewed creativity itself as questionable.

The left, which once wanted to make Shakespeare and Socrates, Tolstoy and Whitman, available to the people, has of late seemed content to deny that there is anything worth reading or thinking about. Admittedly, Western culture has contained some sorry specimens of humanity, but the existence of figures like Wagner, Pound, Céline or Lawrence should not cause us to ignore what Bennett, following Matthew Arnold, correctly speaks of as "the best that has been said, thought, written, and otherwise expressed about the human experience." Having led with our chins, we should not be surprised that conservatives such as Bennett are belting us.

Why, then, does Bennett make me nervous? Not, certainly, because he is ambitious. If he is named Secretary of Education, he will probably be the most literate of the Great Communicator's secondary communicators. Not because his personal canon of the best that has been thought and written does not include the works of Kafka, Proust, Freud and Yeats but does include those of George Eliot and T.S. Eliot. And not because he overlooks the new audiences to which education in the humanities must appeal. (Indeed, the schools he singles out for having made a substantial effort to restore the centrality of the humanities include a municipal college in Brooklyn, a small Catholic college in Indiana and

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a two-year community college in Iowa, whereas "some of the least coherent curricula were those of nationally prestigious, highly selective institutions.")

Because he chooses those colleges as his examples, I find myself wondering whether *To Reclaim a Legacy* will not ultimately be used to attack the open university and democratic higher education. I do not believe that is necessarily Bennett's intention, but it would be easy to use his report for that purpose. One of its major weaknesses is its implication that learning in the humanities takes place in a political vacuum. The author apparently believes we should educate everyone who can be educated, but he carefully avoids—and avoids so cleverly that I cannot believe it is accidental—the question of the purpose for which students should be educated. His view of society ignores the politics of our time, although his list of consultants in the acknowledgments indicates he is very cognizant of academic politics. After all is said and done, are the humanities merely to be ancillary to the technological and vocational education of postindustrial man? Is what is required of students at the Brooklyn institution he praises, a multi-ethnic college reflecting the complexities of urban life, identical to what should be required of students at Cal Tech? Any humanist worth his salt will remember that one of the problems that preoccupied Socrates was determining what questions should be asked. Bennett does not ask the right ones.

No, what makes me nervous about Bennett is his apparent unwillingness to see the decline of education in the humanities—what once was thought of as education for living—as part of a larger decline, a decline in what can only be called our nation's sense of reality. He writes about the best that has been thought and said while ignoring the fact that the Reagan Administration is probably the most hostile to art and intellect of any in this nation's history. And I am not speaking of budget allocations to the National Endowment for the Humanities or the National Endowment for the Arts. I am speaking of the elements of the good life.

The humanities do not exist in a vacuum. And meaningful education in the humanities takes for granted that men and women can be moved by ideas and by the expression of ideas. Despite what Keats wrote, we know that beauty and truth are not interchangeable. But they do exist. The best that has been thought and written is supposed to enable us to separate truth from falsehood. Exactly how does one do that in a culture in which image and substance have absolutely no relationship to each other, a culture in which nonsense is praised as art, in which news is a part of the entertainment industry, in which writers parody themselves and are told how well they have written by critics parodying themselves, in which Andy Warhol is called an artist and Phyllis George is called a newswoman and Bonzo's co-star is not only the President but is also the Great Communicator? It is the appearance of the thing, not the thing itself, that counts.

Yes, the humanities are suffering from a lack of commitment and a desire to please everyone. But they are also suffering from a Federal government that does not consider any kind of education, much less education in the humanities, to be among its responsibilities. They are suffering from students whose grants have been cut to the bone and who use what money they have to take courses that will teach them something "practical." They are suffering from faculties that have, as Bennett notes, lost a good deal of their humanistic commitment but have also lost 20 percent of their purchasing power over the past decade.

With education, whether in the humanities or in mathematics, you get what you pay for. In a nation that has chosen image over substance, we should have no trouble understanding why the study of literature has been eclipsed by the study of something called communications. The humanities will continue to command a certain rhetorical respect, and students will continue to take courses in public speaking and computer science and food management. And in another decade or so, one of Bennett's successors will write another report calling for the restoration of the humanities to their position of centrality in education. A dismal prospect, admittedly. Still, if we have got what we paid for, we must expect to pay for what we have got. □

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THE MEMORY PALACE OF MATTEO RICCI. *By Jonathan D. Spence. Viking. 350 pp. $19.95.*

In the second half of the sixteenth century—after the conquest of the Americas—Madrid, Lisbon and Rome were setting their sights on the material and ideological subjugation of the East. Portuguese beachheads had been established in Macao and Goa, and Francis Xavier himself had brought the Word to India and Japan. He died in 1552 on a barren island off the coast of China, trying to get in, dreaming of the conversion of the Ming Empire.

Goa, a tiny colony on a stretch of paradisiacal beach on the southwestern coast of India, was a glimpse of the kind of world they might have made. It was a place where fortunes could be won, by whites, in the trade of cloth and spices, opium and kidnapped children. It was a place where Brahmans were sent to the galleys, temples razed, festivals and rites forbidden; where hundreds of schoolchildren would be assembled in rows to recite the Lord's Prayer and spit in unison at the mention of a Hindu god. In Goa, its Grand Inquisitor wrote, the land was "filled . . . with fire and the ashes from the dead bodies of heretics and apostates." Their confiscated property was a useful source of income for the church.

But the missionaries failed to penetrate deeper into India, failed even to interest, let alone convert, the Mughal Emperor Akbar. Enthusiasm shifted to Japan, where they had, at first, greater success but were soon defeated and disillusioned by the obscure motivations and the shifting alliances of the rival courts. China, under the rule of the weak Emperor Wanli, who rarely left the palace and allowed the country to be run by the eunuchs, then became the prize. The Jesuits in Macao had become rich from their investments in the Japan-China silk trade, and they had proved particularly helpful to the Chinese by returning slaves who had escaped from the interior into the colony. In 1582, thirty years after the death of Xavier, thanks to the familiar combination of bribery, favors and coercion, they were permitted to take up residence in China itself.

They sent, among a few others, Matteo Ricci, the subject of Jonathan Spence's new book. Ricci had spent five years in Goa and was to live the last twenty-seven years of his life in China. He was, according to Joseph Needham, "one of the most remarkable and brilliant men in history," and his residence, for good or ill, inserted China into the world. For the Chinese, Ricci was the bearer of the news of Western science; for the West, the posthumous publication of his journals and letters provided further tales of the wonders of China, a confirmation of Marco Polo who, after 300 years, had receded into memory as a great fabulist.

There had been missionaries in China before: Nestorians from as early as the seventh century, and Franciscans in the thirteenth. All had failed and vanished. But Ricci succeeded by first establishing himself as a sage and a power broker long before his purpose was made clear. He was, in a way, a mole for Jesus; he kept his crucifix hidden.

For the first six years he adopted the role of a poor Buddhist monk, with shaved head and saffron robe, as he studied the language and the people, who he thought would be drawn by his ascetic purity. The strategy failed, and he realized that he would attract attention only by being what he was, extraordinary. He switched to the elegant purple robes of a scholar and, with his new command of the language, found himself a celebrity.

Ricci brought the Chinese clocks and astrolabes, harpsichords and telescopes. He translated Euclid and snatches of the Greek and Roman philosophers, wrote songs for the Emperor, calculated eclipses, reformed the calendar, prepared a map of the world with Chinese place names, built sundials and introduced Western theories and practices in hydraulics and surveying, geometry and optics, agriculture and astronomy.

He did not bring them, of course, the sciences themselves, but rather new information and new perspectives for reevaluating what they already knew. For the Chinese scholars it was a return to the great age of Chinese science, a millenium or more which had ended three centuries earlier, with the Mongol conquest.

And he did not bring them—except in small doses to a selected few—the Christian dogma. He too dreamed of the conversion of China, and particularly hoped to win the Emperor Wanli. (The closest he came was being allowed—a great honor—to prostrate himself before the empty throne.) But he saw his primary function as that of establishing the respectability, and perhaps the superiority, of Western wisdom, thereby paving the way for the word of God. He was, he wrote, "opening up the wild woods and fighting with the wild beasts and poisonous snakes that lurk within."

He restricted his proselytizing to small gestures, like inscribing the sundials he built with homiletic messages of human frailty and God's grace. (So Cromwell's cannons were inscribed "God is Love.") The benign figure of Mary was emphasized to the point where the Chinese commonly believed the Christian God was a woman. When a palace eunuch discovered Ricci's crucifix, he thought it a black-magic effigy in a plot to kill the king. (Indeed one wonders how the missionaries ever hoped to replace the image of the beatific Buddha with that of a man undergoing torture.) In general, the Chinese thought he was an alchemist, and confused him with the Moslems, Jews and Nestorian Christians who had passed through the country. They saw no distinction between the three Mediterranean monotheisms, and in that they may have been wiser than the West.

There is no doubt that Ricci thought himself among "wild beasts and poisonous snakes" in the spiritual woods of China. He assumed that Asians were "born to serve rather than to command," and had no qualms about slavery. (In fact, he believed it to be one of God's ways of bringing in converts, and owned a few himself.) He misread Confucian doctrine, with its hierarchy leading up to a "supreme ruler," as a rudimentary form of monotheism, and thought it had "the fewest errors of all pagan

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sects." Buddhism he found a seething fleshpot, "a Babylon of doctrines." Converts—and there were not, at first, very many—were praised for destroying their heathen sculpture and books.

Yet what was extraordinary, almost sinister, about Ricci was his tremendous understanding of Chinese things, a sympathy within the antipathy (or perhaps vice versa). His Christian writings in Chinese sound like something from the Chinese classics: "A man who has strong faith in the Way can walk on the yielding water as if on solid rock. . . . When the wise man follows heaven's decrees, fire does not burn him, a sword does not cut him, water does not drown him." And his marvelous map of the world—which Spence unfortunately does not reproduce—presents the six continents (Europe, Libya, Asia, North America, South America and Mowalanichia, that great mass south of the Capes of Good Hope and the Horn) in the loopy Swiss-cheese style of esoteric Taoist art, where the solid is defined by the void, the earth by the "constellation holes" of the sky. Sinophile and Sinophobe, inexhaustible fountain of information about both East and West, he worked in tremendous isolation. Letters from Europe could take as many as seventeen years to arrive (three was the norm) and most of Ricci's library was carried in his head.

His prodigious memory was the product of intensive mnemonic training in the Jesuit colleges of Rome and Florence, a system of memory techniques that dated back at least as far as the first century B.C. and was used until cheap printing simplified access to information. It depended, briefly, on the construction of imaginary mental palaces, filled with indelible, highly associative images. (Francis Yates's great book *The Art of Memory*, details the history of the mnemonic system as an organizing principle for much of medieval and Renaissance culture.)

Ricci's first book in Chinese was—nice gesture—a *Treatise on Friendship*. His second was a *Treatise on the Mnemonic Arts*, which he correctly guessed would attract the young men who needed to memorize the classics to pass the examinations that insured a place in the bureaucracy. (The Chinese mnemonic system, which had produced wonders, had by that time largely disappeared.)

The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci is constructed from four images from Ricci's memory book, as well as four Bible illustrations which Ricci provided for a printmaker as examples of Western art. Each image leads Spence to a topic—war and violence, water and travel, foreigners, trade and profit, understanding and education, sin, the Virgin Mary—which he discusses without chronological sequence. The action shifts back and forth between Asia and the Europe of the Counter-Reformation, between historical and biographical events.

It is a dazzling structure: to take a word like "water" and then extrapolate, in meticulous detail, what it would have meant to this person, living in this time and these places. Surely Spence will have many imitators. But the unintentional effect of the procedure, in this case, is that it is all background with little foreground: Ricci himself remains something of a blur. I suspect the format would be more successful with a figure whose life and relative importance is generally better known.

As the subject is Matteo Ricci and not, say, Columbus, I think the book needs one more chapter to make it perfect. (As it is, it ends with a rather weak "poetic" epilogue). A chapter assessing the effect of Ricci on both East and West. (To cite one example, Ricci's posthumously published journals were hugely popular and influential in the early seventeenth century. Spence naturally relies heavily on them, but never mentions their life in book form.) Or a chapter where Spence himself, who remains "objective" and invisible throughout, steps from behind the scenery to comment. A chapter which, in a few strokes, would pull it all together. In Confucian terms, a pivot, a still center to hold together this world of shimmering specifics he has drawn. □

Reading Backward

ALEXANDER STILLE

DIFFICULT LOVES. *By Italo Calvino. Translated by William Weaver, Archibald Colquhoun and Peggy Wright. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 290 pp. $14.95.*

Italo Calvino's *Difficult Loves* is likely to surprise American readers. But if this collection of realistic short stories seems out of place, it is because we have come to know Calvino backward: he first became well-known here in the 1970s with his fantastical and highly experimental novels. Since then his earlier books have been working their way back into print, or into English translation for the first time. Can the author of these stories of peasants, fishermen and resistance fighters, written between 1945 and 1958, be the same Calvino who wrote the memoirs of a submolecular particle (*Cosmicomics*) and avant-garde tales of nonexistent knights and invisible cities?

This collection appears on the heels of Calvino's relentlessly modernist *If on a winter's night a traveler*, a labyrinth of novels within novels. That book contains chapters from ten different novels, where, with perfect pitch and great comic effect, Calvino mimes every literary form from the detective story to the Japanese erotic romance, from the European novel of despair to the South American thriller of torture and terrorism. The true protagonists of the book are the two people who read these ten fragments (just as we do) and fall in love as they try to put the pieces together. Through this device, Calvino makes the reader a participant and the book's real hero. *If on a winter's night* stands realism on its head. To Calvino, the novel is not a mirror of reality; it is reality, the reality of our minds.

As great as the contrast may seem between his late work and the early fiction represented in *Difficult Loves*, Calvino's neorealist period was not a youthful aberration. Calvino was close to the Communist Party for many years and continued to admire Italy's neorealist masters Cesare Pavese and Elio Vittorini long after he left the genre behind. The particular value of *Difficult Loves* is that it permits us to see as gradual and organic the transformation from Calvino's somewhat awkward early stories to his subtle, introspective and funny later writing, suggested by the tales that close the collection.

The book contains twenty-eight brief stories and is divided into four sections.

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In the first group, "Riviera Stories," the pieces are both lyrical evocations of country life and understated descriptions of social tension. In one, two poor children explore the grounds of a lavish estate; they run away after spotting a little boy who lives there. In another the presence of a young goatherd at lunch disturbs the son of a well-to-do family, who is troubled by his inability to talk with the rustic.

If the stories are not particularly satisfying, it may be because Calvino tries to get around the typical neorealist subject matter of open injustice, pathos and the nobility of peasant life. As neorealist stories they are very nearly failures but, in their quiet way, they try to do something different. They concern themselves with nonevents, moments of mutual incomprehension and noncommunication. And they give occasional glimpses of the mature Calvino: the melancholy tone, the interest in the internal world of the mind and in the indecipherability of the external world.

The story "One of the Three Is Still Alive," which appears in the second section, "Wartime Stories," is something of a breakthrough; Calvino successfully transforms an action-filled war story into an inner voyage. A group of resistance fighters capture three Nazi soldiers, throw them in a ditch and start to shoot. One of the soldiers escapes the massacre through a tunnel leading out of the ditch. The bleeding man crawls through wet and slimy caverns and emerges, at the story's end,

> naked in wild and deserted parts, [where] the nearest human beings were enemies who would pursue him with pitchforks and guns as soon as they saw him. . . . Life, thought the naked man, was a hell, with rare moments recalling some ancient paradise.

What's especially interesting about this story is that it appears to turn itself inside out. Beginning as an acutely realistic tale of flesh, dirt and blood, it then focuses on the internal state of the surviving soldier. As the man creeps through the underground passage, the story moves from the world of realism to the fantastic, cavernous and solipsistic world of the mind, Calvino's true domain.

In an essay written twenty-five years ago, Calvino made it clear that there was a definite bridge between his neorealist war stories and his later novels. He wrote that he no longer found realism interesting when reality itself ceased to be interesting:

> The reality around me no longer gave me those energetic images that I like to express. I am among the writers who have moved away from the literature of the resistance, but I didn't want to give up its epic and adventurous charge of physical and moral energy. Because the images of contemporary life no longer met this need, I transferred this energy into fantastic stories, outside of time and beyond reality.

In the third section of *Difficult Loves*, "Postwar Stories," Calvino tries to energize prosaic postwar reality by injecting an element of comic distortion. In "Theft in a Pastry Shop," one of the robbers becomes so obsessed with eating pastries that he forgets the cash register and is oblivious to the approach of the police. The policemen in turn catch his obsession, begin nibbling away and fail to see the thief sneak from the store with a shirtful of pastries for his girlfriend. In "Dollars and the Demimondaine," a group of American sailors, famished for sex, encircle a woman in a bar. Her timid husband, unable to rescue her, tries another approach: he rounds up all the prostitutes in town and rushes them back to the bar in a convoy of taxicabs. In each of these stories Calvino describes an ordinary scene and animates it to a feverish pitch until it leaves realism behind.

The final section, "Stories of Love and Loneliness," contains the real gems of the collection. In "The Adventure of a Soldier," a soldier on a train tries to seduce a handsome widow. He begins an elaborate set of advances and retreats but cannot tell if her placidity is encouragement or obliviousness. Calvino involves us in this intense yet comic mental drama without a single word of dialogue and without telling us what, if anything, has really passed between the characters.

As Calvino has moved toward the fantastic, he has not stopped writing realistic stories. In fact, the stories in a new book, published in Italian in 1983 and expected out in English next year, resemble the last stories in *Difficult Loves*. He has sought, instead, the fantastic in the mundane, transforming it through comic exaggeration. This collection allows us to see that process evolving from one story to the next. □

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A Life's Work

BLAIR CLARK

MAVERICK: Fifty Years of Investigative Reporting. *By Fred J. Cook. G.P. Putnam's Sons. 320 pp. $18.95.*

Fred Cook begins his memoir, *Maverick*, by saying that as he looks back from "the age of elderly astonishment," he is "amazed at how I got so far so fast." That line might come better from the heir of a Sulzberger, Pulitzer, Graham or Luce, for Cook's extraordinary career and accomplishments came slowly and painfully.

He edged into the business of writing his splendid exposés of high-level chicanery, corruption and repression while he was still laboring as a rewrite man on the undistinguished *New York World-Telegram and Sun.* Many readers of *The Nation* are old enough to remember that it was Carey McWilliams who first discovered Cook's unused talent, encouraged him to develop it and published the results. McWilliams would never have claimed that he "made" Fred Cook. Cook created himself as a great investigative journalist and as the author of forty-two books. And he didn't begin this career as a journalist and author until he had put in fifteen years on the *World-Telegram*. But his connection with *The Nation* stimulated his efforts and enriched his reporting.

It is hard not to grow sentimental about the life behind the work as one reads these unadorned pages. Cook had so few advantages—no well-placed relatives, fancy education or friends to help him up the ladder. His father was a department manager in a small-town hardware store on the Jersey shore, his mother a schoolteacher. Cook turned 21 in the deep depression year of 1932; life had to be led frugally.

Nevertheless he grew up in what he calls "one of the most blissful homes a boy was ever reared in." His parents were supportive, devoted and determined to help him along the way even when he decided at the age of 15 to be, of all things, a writer. His father was not shocked: he himself had only a sixth-grade education, but he had plowed through the encyclopedia and was the town tax collector. He would have gone into this kind of profession if he had had even the modest advantages that helped his son along.

Cook's early years on a small New Jersey daily led to a short stint as editor of an embattled weekly which jousted with crooked local bosses and their moneyed allies. He learned to distrust and dislike the rich and powerful but he still believed that an independent press could keep those types sufficiently in check for the system to work well. At the age of 33 he got a chance to go to the big city, to Roy Howard's *World-Telegram*.

It was from this confinement that he broke loose into the pages of *The Nation*, "pretty well disenchanted with the distortions" of the *World-Telegram*, he writes, and certain that writing for *The Nation* would not advance his career with Howard. Not having read *The Nation* for years, he nevertheless jumped at the chance to write stories he otherwise could not have got into print. There began a long series of articles in this magazine, starting in 1958 with the debunking of the myth of Boris Morros, Soviet spy turned American patriot and witch hunter.

Cook writes that "Carey McWilliams was my kind of man," by which he means much more than just another iconoclast. What Cook admired in the editor was his industry, his capacity to see the connections between events and, above all, his fierce hatred of all kinds of injustice. Their close relationship survived McWilliams's disagreement with Cook's conviction that the Warren commission had not got to the conspiratorial bottom of the Kennedy assassination.

When he did his series of articles on the Central Intelligence Agency, the first of their kind, Cook accepted McWilliams's stricture that his reports were to be based entirely on the written record, with absolutely no interviewing of his own. (McWilliams was a firm believer in the solidity of the written record as against spoken words, and he also thought, understandably, that he should not put the survival of his underfunded magazine at risk.)

Many of those articles, fruits of the collaboration between McWilliams and Cook, were turned into books which had much more influence than their sales figures would suggest. There were, among others, *The Unfinished Story of Alger Hiss, The Warfare State, The FBI Nobody Knows, The Corrupted Land, The Secret Rulers, The Nightmare Decade* and *The Great Energy Scam: Private Billions vs. Public Good.*

After all this labor, and twenty-five years after he quit his last salaried newspaper job to struggle as a freelancer, Fred Cook is still productive (his account of his own surveillance by the F.B.I. will appear soon in *The Nation*). Scholars with years to spend studying this period in libraries may chip away at the rough blocks of facts Cook assembled in the midst of the fray, but the monument of a life's work as an investigative reporter remains for anyone to see and admire.

One of Cook's successors in this art, Robert Caro, author of the stunning work *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*, and of *The Years of Lyndon Johnson: The Path to Power*, pays extraordinary tribute to him in the Moses book. He sees Cook as the central figure in the small group of New York newspaper reporters whose collaboration (behind the backs of their bosses) on the story of Moses's corruption forced it onto the front pages of all the city's newspapers—even, at last, of *The New York Times*.

In those days, Caro says, Cook was "the quintessential rewriteman, so accustomed to seeing the world through the earpiece of a telephone headset and notes taken by other men that he felt no need to see it for himself." He marvels at the fact that in three years of writing about the Manhattantown development scandal, a twenty-minute subway ride from his office, Cook never went to look at it. Of course, as Caro notes, Cook saw the essential truth about it better, even from his desk, than almost anyone else.

A.J. Liebling, that pre-eminent critic of the press, wrote that "in inverse order of worldly consideration," there are three kinds of "writers of news." The first and most lowly is "the reporter who writes what he sees," followed by "the interpretive reporter, who writes what he sees and what he construes to be its meaning," topped by "the expert, who writes what he construes to be the meaning of what he hasn't seen." Fred Cook is about the best example we have of the first two categories and may only be denied the ironic "expert" laurel because he has so

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often "seen" without actually having to look at some concrete reality.

Maverick skips back and forth between the story of Fred Cook's own life and the stories he covered, uncovered and discovered. At the end he writes, "I don't know how much I have accomplished in my years of lonely crusading, but at least I have tried." Of course, he accomplished a great deal; there can be no doubt about that. There must be young journalists out there still who chafe against the restraints of homogenized establishment organs and wish they could break the mold and do something serious on their own. They would find a model in this book on the life and work of Fred J. Cook. □

MUSIC.

EVAN EISENBERG

Leipzig Gewandhaus

Wagner writes in his memoirs that when he was 16 or so, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony "became the mystical goal of all my strange thoughts and desires about music. I was first attracted to it by the opinion prevalent among musicians, not only in Leipzig but elsewhere, that this work had been written by Beethoven when he was already half mad." Wagner believed there was method in that madness but he could not be certain, since he had never actually heard the work. He had stayed up nights copying the score; he had made a transcription for piano; and in 1830 he looked forward giddily to the next performance of the symphony, a more or less annual event in his home town of Leipzig. In *My Life* he remembers the rehearsal:

> After the first three movements had been played straight through like a Haydn symphony, as well as the orchestra could manage it. . . . the wild shrieks of the trumpet (with which [the fourth] movement begins) resulted in the most extraordinary confusion of sound. . . . Pohlenz was in a bath of perspiration, the recitative did not come off, and I really began to think that Beethoven had written nonsense.

The Gewandhaus Orchestra of Leipzig has improved since Wagner's disillusionment. If, at Carnegie Hall last month, the orchestra played the first three movements of the Ninth "like a Haydn symphony," it did so in the very best sense. There was no straining for sublimity, only the working out of a muscular logic. The recitative was smooth as *Schlag*, and the finale, which in some hands becomes a sloppy bacchanal or a haphazard string of variety acts, was splendidly paced. The musicians ran their course, exultant as heroes running to victory. If you check the text, this is exactly what the tenor tells them to do.

It was a very satisfying conclusion to the orchestra's Beethoven cycle under its music director, Kurt Masur. I had come to the cycle with great expectations, having fallen in love with the orchestra two years earlier in this same hall. It is not only the noises it makes that make the Gewandhaus lovable, it is also the echo of ancient noises the orchestra has known—the voices of Telemann, Bach, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Wagner. I happen to be a sucker for this sort of thing.

When Carnegie Hall was a stand of virgin timber, Leipzig had a rich musical tradition. A church choir is recorded in 1017, and by the late middle ages there were *Stadtpfeifer* and *Kunstgeiger*, wind and string players, on the town payroll. In 1688 Kuhnau founded a *collegium musicum* or amateur chamber group; in 1704 Telemann stole some of his players and started a rival ensemble, which J.S. Bach, cantor of the Thomaskirche, took over in 1729. In 1743, a number of collegia that had been playing in coffeehouses joined forces under Bach's student Doles and hired a tavern, and in 1781 the construction of a new guild hall for the drapers gave Leipzig's big orchestra a home and a name. This fluid compound of amateur and professional musicians was soon mixing in every aspect of Leipzig's musical life, with members playing at Thomaskirche services, at the opera, at civic ceremonies and—a persistent addiction—in coffeehouses. (The orchestra has retained its versatility under Communist patronage. While 150 of its members are on tour, fifty stay behind to take care of business at home.)

Mozart conducted two of his symphonies in 1789, and to keep the players from dragging he beat time so hard that his shoe buckle burst—an incident which, in the words of Fritz Hennenberg's 1962 monograph, "throws a characteristic light on the truly genial mentality of the orchestra." In fact the players were not used to being beaten at. As a rule the concertmaster would lead, a conductor being called in only when there were choral forces to be managed. Christian Pohlenz's successor, Felix Mendelssohn, was the orchestra's

Evan Eisenberg's book, The Recording Angel: Aspects of Phonography, *will be published by McGraw-Hill in the fall.*

Leipzig Gewandhaus on Records

As the conductor's name is unknown and the orchestra's unpronounceable, few of their recordings are available here; a Beethoven cycle made for Philips a decade ago never reached these shores. The following recordings, on Philips unless otherwise noted, are currently in the catalogue:

Beethoven: Violin Concerto, with Salvatore Accardo (leisurely and lyrical). Violin Concerto, with Yehudi Menuhin (Angel).

Brahms: Piano concertos, with Misha Dichter. Symphonies and other works. (I haven't heard this set, but it was not well reviewed). Hungarian Dances. Serenade No. 1. "Double" Concerto, with R. and G. Ricci (Vox).

Bruch: Violin concertos, with Accardo (marvelous playing all round). Scottish Fantasy, Konzertstück, with Accardo (likewise). Symphony No. 2 (music to brood by, thoughtfully done).

Liszt: Complete music for piano and orchestra, with Michel Béroff (Pantheon, 211 East 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10017; sweeping, streamlined performances that minimize the schmaltz). "Totentanz" and other works (Angel).

Mahler: Symphony No. 5 (Vanguard).

Mendelssohn: Symphonies (Vanguard; I've heard only the "Italian": so-so sound, fine playing, a little too much reverence for the former headmaster).

Strauss: Four Last Songs, with Jessye Norman. Songs, with Siegfried Jerusalem.

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(and arguably Europe's) first real conductor. If, at his first rehearsal in 1835, Mendelssohn found the orchestra "very good, thoroughly musical," he soon made it immeasurably better. When Berlioz came to conduct his "Symphonie Fantastique" and two overtures—works as arcane in 1842 as Beethoven's Ninth Symphony had been in 1830—he was pleasantly surprised to find two rehearsals sufficient for an "irreproachable" performance. Since then the orchestra's music directors have included Nikisch, Furtwängler and Walter (who was forced to resign by the Nazis). Brahms, Wagner, Grieg, Saint-Saëns, Tchaikovsky, Mahler, Richard Strauss and Stravinsky all conducted at one time or another.

Given all this, one might like to believe that the orchestra's character is a matter of tradition, that it plays Beethoven now somewhat the way it played Beethoven in 1801 or 1830. If it did, Carnegie Hall would have emptied out presto—just ask Wagner. And yet there may be some present significance to the fact that most of Beethoven's symphonies were played in Leipzig within a year of their Vienna premieres and that they were played straight through, without the deletions or vaudeville additions resorted to elsewhere. With no aristocrats in town to mimic, the burghers of Leipzig had to rely on their own instincts. Instinctively they took Beethoven seriously—not as a god, not as a fad, but as a brother who could speak for them—and it may be this attitude, rather than any particular approach to sforzandos or fermatas, that has been passed along behind the desks for the past couple of centuries. Indeed, a certain attitude toward music at large—born of a Lutheran mingling of church and *Stadt* and private enthusiasm—seems to have survived the various regimes from Doles to Masur, from Frederick II to Honecker. Which is not to say that Furtwängler's Ninth would have sounded remotely like Masur's. I know only Furtwängler's Bayreuth recording, but if a Leipzig version turns up that sounds like Masur's I'll eat it. A tricky thing, tradition.

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Masur has been music director since 1970. He spends six or seven months a year with the orchestra, which is about twice the average for brand-name free-world conductors. His musicians have the attentiveness (to him and to one another) of serious students, which is no accident; most are alumni of the Hochschule für Musik, the Leipzig conservatory established in 1843 by Mendelssohn, where Masur and several of the first-desk people teach. And the conductor, who won the German Democratic Republic's Brahms Look-alike Contest three years in a row, does seem more the fatherly professor than the artiste. To his gestures, which range from fingertip petit point to a broad beer-hall rock, the players respond instantly—audibly and visibly. (At the end of the storm in the Sixth, Masur leaned menacingly toward the cellos when their low C thunderings failed to recede, and the first-desk players not only hushed up but actually leaned backward. Masur is scheduled to conduct the New York Philharmonic in February, and I fear for his ribs.)

The winds in some American orchestras sound like organ pipes. The Gewandhaus winds are another story; I was sitting too low to be sure, but from the sound I could have sworn there were people breathing into them. Phrases were shaped, not just opened and shut. In the Sixth Symphony, the flutes made quivering nightingale sounds here, icy lightning (in league with the piccolo) there; and the duet of oboe and bassoon in the third movement took on just the right touch of rusticity. As for the strings, they are neither as glossy as in most American orchestras nor as honeyed as in Vienna or Berlin. They are civilized and trim, in the Saxon and Anglo-Saxon manner. These strings play tennis. If the orchestra has a fault, it is the tendency of the cellos to play too quietly and too legato, so that when playing in octaves with the basses they almost vanish—the bass line is felt but not heard.

Masur has a way of making rhythmic motives evident but not obnoxious, so that they really do motivate the music. Without that skill, a conductor essaying Beethoven is rafting without a paddle. But sometimes Beethoven's rhythms *are* obnoxious, as in finales of the Seventh and Eighth and almost all of the Fifth; and the conductor who slips past the rowdier rapids is likely to disappoint the vulgar crowd, including me. Masur also forgoes heroics, and in this repertory that takes heroism. His restraint paid off everywhere but in the Fifth, which was painfully deflated—one could almost hear the hiss of warm air.

Since I missed the two concerts given in October, my first impression was of the Fourth and Fifth Symphonies. The Fifth was predictably wan but the Fourth should have been wonderful; it was merely fine, probably because the orchestra was still taking the measure of Carnegie after a month of town halls and maximum-security Holiday Inns. After that it was whack, whack, whack—the Sixth hit right on the nose, the Seventh and Eighth looped elegantly into short center, the Ninth knocked out of the park.

Perhaps a program, or at least a nickname, gives the Leipzig imagination the tiny nudge it needs to soar. The "Pastoral" began with a true allegro ma non troppo that gradually relaxed, indicating the "awakening of cheerful feelings on arriving in the country." (Masur is rattling along in a coach and inhaling the new air, whereas someone like Walter seems to have been mellowing out in Heiligenstadt for a week already.) And then the brook babbled, the peasants danced, the storm stormed, the air cleared and thanksgiving was offered in the most native and heartfelt way. The "Choral" Symphony was just as bright-eyed.

These joyful results seem to have been obtained by means dry as dust: a respect for dynamic markings and repeats, a pedant's analysis of form, a jurist's notion of tempo, and an absolute attention to the sounds each player

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was making. The outcome confirmed the words inscribed above the door of the original Gewandhaus, and beneath the organ pipes of the present one: *Res severa verum gaudium*, which may be rendered, "True pleasure is a serious matter," or perhaps, "A difficult activity is a true joy." □

THEATER.

PAUL BERMAN

La Bohème
Shepardsets

How goes t with American theater music? Badly, of course, and still worse if you think about it. Consider the microphone problem. Once upon a time pit orchestras did without microphones. Even small orchestras like the two-piano ensembles George Gershwin used went unamplified. And audiences thought the sound was fine. The same pianos today would have the audience cupping its ears and shouting, Eh? Eh? Turn on the static and distortion, the audience would cry. We won't mind the noise. We're deaf anyway, so what's the difference? Modern performers, meanwhile, are dumb. Singers no longer know how to fill up a hall unaided. Linda Ronstadt sings the theater-version *La Bohème* in a hall so tiny it is only seven rows deep; and even so her thin flat flute of a voice requires a mike; and still she can't make herself heard. As for theater composers, they are hardly writing at the level of forty or fifty years ago, all of which makes the situation look pretty grim. Audience appreciation—down. Performer technique—down. Artistic creativity—down. It must have been like this during the fall of the Roman Empire. No one knows how to read. No one knows how to write. No one bothers to weed the roads.

That is why we should look sympathetically at anybody who wants to experiment with theater music—even to the extent of cutting up old warhorses like *Carmen* or *La Bohème*. There's no harm, contrary to what we're told, in tearing apart an old master now and then, since the masters can always be put back together. Maybe there's something to be learned, for instance, about the possible relation of book and score. Peter Brook carved up *Carmen* last year to very good effect. He re-

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duced the orchestra to a chamber group. He made the muffled sounds of kettle drums and solo viola dominate the score. The music became intimate, informal, stark, almost primitive, which is to say, modern. It wasn't Bizet exactly, but it wasn't bad either and it succeeded in heightening the story. That's what theater music is supposed to do.

Wilford Leach's vivisection of *La Bohème* at the Public Theater could, in principle, have been an equal success; but viewed with all the sympathy in the world, it is anything but. One might blame the unimaginative plot adaptation, the hokey sets, the box-office aspiration that induced Leach and Joseph Papp to humiliate Linda Ronstadt by making her sing, which she was never meant to do. But let me mention only the orchestral failings. Puccini's score, as everyone knows, is a giant pulsating heart in the throes of giant emotions, and the crucial musical effects are lushness of tone and huge swells of intensity. Both effects require massed phalanxes of strings, which can't be used in a scaled-down theater version. What to do?

Michael Starobin has orchestrated the Leach *Bohème*, and he has done what he did with Stephen Sondheim's *Sunday in the Park With George*. He uses a combination of woodwinds and keyboards, including electronic ones. Vibraphone and marimba-sounding keyboards, plucked strings, bells and cymbals fill the score, and just as in *Sunday in the Park*, the result is percussive and chilly. Percussive chill is, of course, the essence of Sondheim but not of Puccini, so there's already a problem. And having thrown away Puccini's warm Italian heart, Starobin tries to retain the gushing swells instead of abandoning them, too, which would have been a prudent idea. Sitting twenty feet from the orchestra, you might imagine you're hearing *Bohème* on a tinny AM radio. The orchestra practically rattles. This isn't the solution for modern theater music. This is the problem. The Public Theater *Bohème* can still be somewhat moving, especially when the shifting casts feature Patti Cohenour and Gary Morris, a country singer; but that's also true of AM radio.

Meanwhile LaMama has just completed its own musical experiment in a presentation of three Sam Shepard plays. The plays, *Suicide in B Flat*, *Back Bog Beast Bait* and *Angel City*, have all of the awfulness and some of the wonderfulness of Shepard's work generally: the lapses into purple writing, the posturing, the intellectual vacuity, the shapelessness, the screechy tone he unerringly achieves. Also the energetic parodic fascination with pop culture, the touches of emotional intensity, the deadpan humor, the Beat-style spontaneity and the stream of inventiveness. The three plays feel like histrionic cartoons whose law of structure is the kind of ever-shifting trippy obsession mind-narrowing drugs induce. What kind of music could add to or, more important, shore up plays like these?

Max Roach wrote the scores, and the music was by and large bebop, sometimes raucous and atonal, sometimes conventional and melodic. There was a lot of dry musical wit, parodying mystery themes in *Suicide in B Flat*, California romanticism in *Angel City*. This highlighted Shepard's humor. Sometimes the score consisted merely of a drummer or keyboard player maintaining a light, barely audible rhythm in the background. This kept tension alive during the long stretches when the playwright seems to be nodding off, though in the case of *Back Bog Beast Bait* the stretch lasts most of the evening, and nothing can prevent the play from settling into the swamp.

One might expect that the music, being jazz, would add to the illusion of spontaneity, but that didn't turn out to be the case. The plays have an offhand feel, which contributes to whatever power they possess. But the music (like the excellent sets by Bill Stabile) was smooth and professional. It added a sense of sophistication. Perhaps this went against Shepard's purpose, but it was a good thing nevertheless. The worst moments became tolerable, mostly, and the best moments more hilarious or intense. I can't imagine a better presentation of Sam Shepard. But then even Max Roach's estimable score has a quality that's not so encouraging for the future of theater music. Bebop isn't exactly new and fresh. The exit music one night I attended was a Charlie Parker tune that is more than thirty years old. Roach's collaboration with George Ferencz, the director, was very productive. But is this the avant-garde? □

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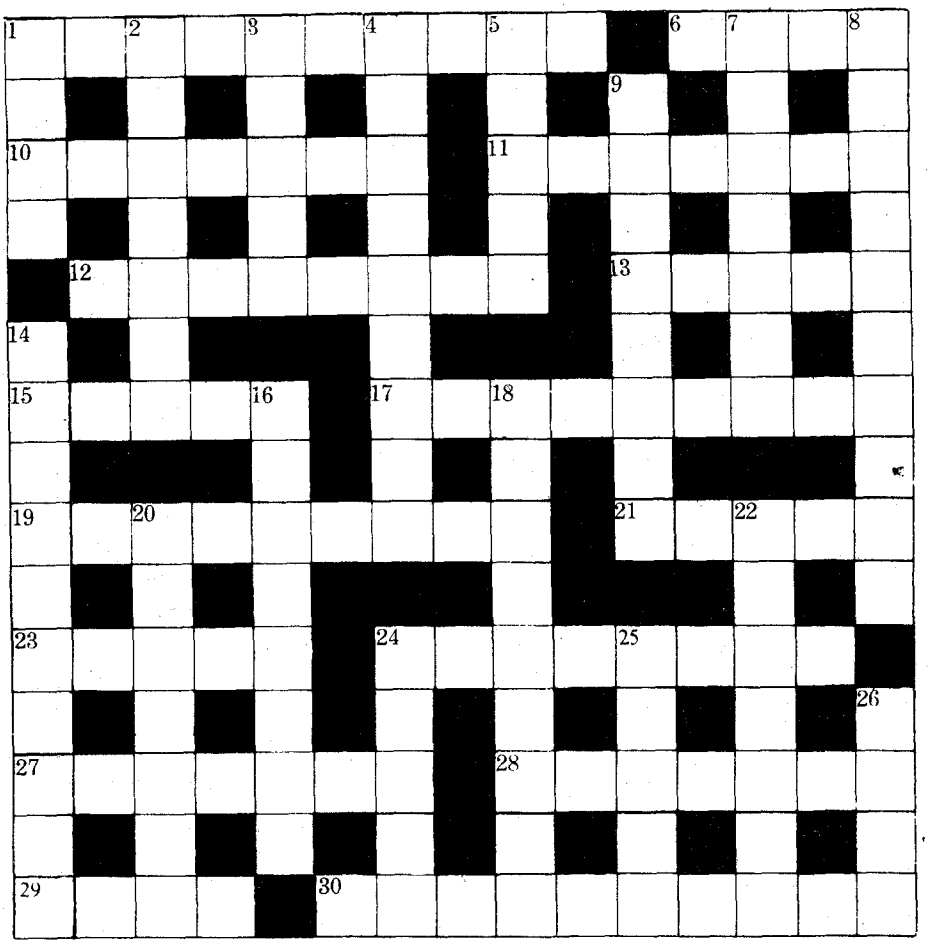

ACROSS

1 One is practically a philosopher! (10)
6 Washington, when little, and what he did in "coming clean." (4)
10 Around fifty, one who can hit a ball reputedly puts up a good fight! (7)
11 If you are, there may be no hook involved. (7)
12 Something might come in here for transport. (8)
13 A climbing plant is just a thing to clinch things with, when coming back. (5)
15 You might need it in almost all of France. (5)
17 No inhabited region is so stormy. (9)
19 Not second helpings but it might add to the cost of the trip. (5,4)
21 One of those things that's left to women, naturally. (5)
23 What a small broom might do, now his kind reveals it. (5)
24 Those who pay up would never leave things 17, so let's rest, for a change. (8)
27 Chapter and verse, to a Hindu. (3-4)
28 The sort of age I'm in, as one can visualize. (7)
29 Kind of put things in order? (4)
30 The Lonesome Pine, for example, might be associated with traces of something. (10)

DOWN

1 What some people crawl to, if they really want a drink? (4)
2 Tolstoy heroine, about ten, but still capable of feeling things. (7)
3 Cut for purposes of grinding. (5)
4 Responsible for the dance craze? (9)
5 Sibilant sister, sometimes associated with sewers. (5)
7 A large trouble served a lady right at one time! (7)
8 Intoxicated, as they say—and yet teetotal, as they say! (One might not like to be left it.) (4,3,3)
9 One might make it dovetail when infringed upon. (8)
14 If confused, take Fred a straw later on. (10)
16 Top-notch, as they say, and came first—but made a noise when fired. (8)
18 The lady evidently has an object, but that's what a sword might need! (9)
20 You shouldn't be so happy to consider it neater. . . (7)
22 . . .but Smith was the happy one! (7)
24 An Indian teacher traveled in the water over one. (5)
25 I may do something by yours, if you don't mind! (5)
26 Objectively she has a point in being at this place. (4)

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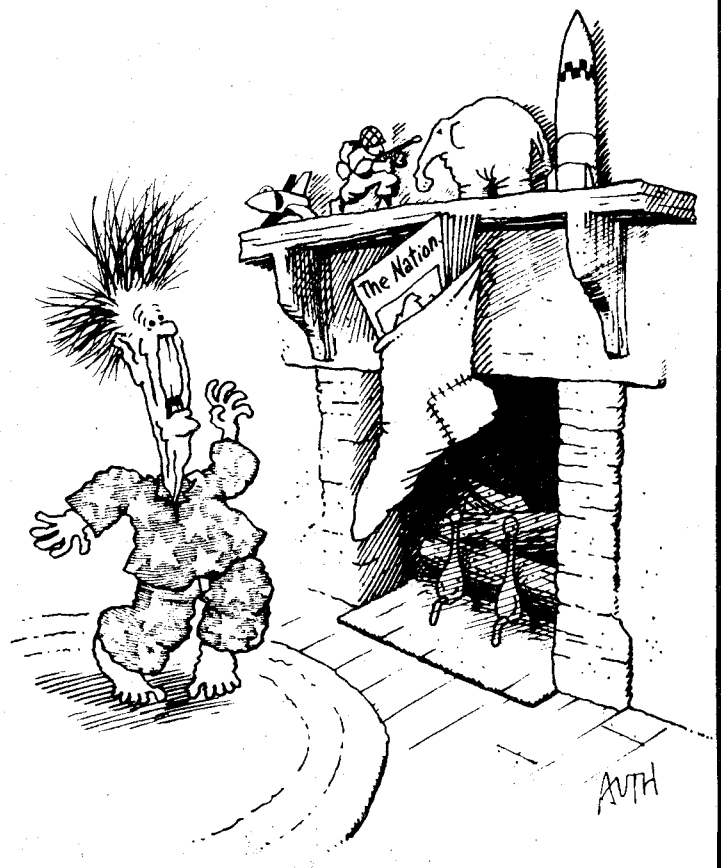

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